
00143030

NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

POLITICAL PORTRAITS

Characters of Some of our Public Men

REPRINTED FROM "THE DAILY NEWS," REVISED AND WITH ADDITIONAL SKETCHES

THIRD EDITION



CO.
LONDON

eserved.]


00143030

LONDON:
PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO.,
CITY ROAD.

PREFACE.

MOST of the following sketches were published in the *Daily News* at intervals during the latter half of the recess of 1872-3. The approach of the Parliamentary session has interrupted them, the shadows vanishing as the substances make their appearance. For the omission of some notable names, the writer can only plead that twenty sketches could not include more than twenty persons. The volume exhibits but a sample of our public men, and a sample the fairer, perhaps, because it has been taken somewhat at random. Though avowing definite political opinions, the writer

is not conscious of any bias for or against individuals. Trojan or Tyrian has made no difference to him. If the impression left on the reader by the sketches is that in England, as in other countries, political affairs are, with four or five exceptions of high and signal capacity, in the hands of men of ability and character, indeed, but of second-rate ability and commonplace character, it is probable that the same impression would be made yet more strongly by the habit of listening to the Parliamentary debates and by some acquaintance with public business. The rule of intellectual averages governs Cabinets and Parliaments; and what Mr. Herbert Spencer conceives to be the law of "the Selection of the Fittest" as yet applies only imperfectly. It may be superfluous to add that these sketches are not biographies, and that they do not affect any minute or complete psychological analysis. They essay in each case no more than to note and illustrate certain leading features of character,

which may afford some clue to the career and the associated qualities of men, a knowledge of the main outlines of whose public lives may fairly be assumed in English readers.

February 11*th*, 1873.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. MR. GLADSTONE	1
II. MR. DISRAELI	22
III. MR. LOWE	39
IV. MR. BRIGHT	57
V. THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY	76
VI. LORD DERBY	92
VII. MR. CARDWELL	108
VIII. LORD RUSSELL	123
IX. LORD GRANVILLE	141
X. LORD SELBORNE	156
XI. LORD CAIRNS	168
XII. MR. GATHORNE HARDY	183
XIII. MR. W. E. FORSTER	197
XIV. LORD JOHN MANNERS	212
XV. MR. WARD HUNT	226
XVI. MR. HENLEY	240
XVII. LORD HALIFAX	254
XVIII. THE DUKE OF ARGYLL	270
XIX. SIR JOHN DUKE COLERIDGE	285
XX. MR. AYRTON	301

I.

MR. GLADSTONE.

MORE than thirty years have passed since Lord Macaulay described Mr. Gladstone as "the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories, who follow reluctantly and mutinously a leader whose experience and eloquence are indispensable to them, but whose cautious temper and moderate opinions they abhor."

> "From that spring whence comfort seemed to come,
> Discomfort swells."

It is only necessary to turn from the *Edinburgh Review* of April, 1839, to the *Quarterly Review* of October, 1872, to learn how complete has been the disappointment. Stern and unbending Toryism

has not survived it, except in the solitary person of Lord Salisbury. The cautious temper and moderate opinions which were the rock on which Conservatism was destined to split in Sir Robert Peel are its very ark of refuge in the present Lord Derby. The prevalent Tory conception of Mr. Gladstone exhibits him as a mixture of Cromwell and Gambetta. A good many people seriously believe that the Throne and the Altar are in danger at his hands; that property—especially property in land—is not safe; and that, after three warnings, the House of Lords is doomed to perish. The most trivial incidents feed this wild alarm. They are magnified by suspicion into symptoms. Not only does Mr. Gladstone listen attentively to Mr. Mill, and take Mr. Bright for his chief adviser in the Cabinet, but he receives Mr. Finlen in Carlton-house-terrace, and quotes from a compilation of Mr. Bradlaugh's at Blackheath. Some of the more ingenious and better read of his critics find, it is said, an allusion to

Mr. Gladstone in a Shakespearian prophecy, and think that the warning given to a former King of England, that

"By G,
His issue disinherited should be,"

though it may have referred in the first instance to Edward IV. and the Duke of Gloucester, has yet a second reference to the present Sovereign and the Prime Minister. Mr. Gladstone, according to the distorted image of him which is painted on the Tory retina, aims at Dictatorship. He seizes, it is seriously said, the prerogative of the Crown, in order to coerce the independence of the House of Lords; he uses his majority in the House of Commons to overbear the Sovereign; and he dragoons the House of Commons by appeals to a public opinion and a national will, independent of and superior to it, of which he affects to be the priest and interpreter. The abolition of purchase in the army is a part of his far-reaching design. As Mr. Disraeli has pointed

out to his terror-stricken followers, it breaks the connection of military officers with the propertied classes of the country, and substitutes for the sons of peers, country gentlemen, and wealthy traders, a body of professional adventurers, ready, as in France, at a moment's notice, to do the bidding of some extemporised Chief of the State. If it were not quite certain that Mr. Gladstone had taken the vows of the Jesuits, it would be probable that he covertly belonged to the International; and it may be that he is in some mysterious way the connecting link between these two terrible foes of Church and State.

This sketch exhibits, with only such exaggeration as is implied in giving distinct shape to obscure alarms, the image of Mr. Gladstone which haunts many a country parsonage, and is not unknown in certain nooks and corners of the House of Commons. It scarcely involves a greater mistake than that misjudgment of Toryism which Lord Macaulay has preserved in his celebrated

article, and from which, as a critical Whig, he does not appear to have dissented. "Stern and unbending" are, however, the last words which can be applied to Mr. Gladstone's temper or convictions. Openness of mind, eagerness to learn, candour in the confession of past mistakes, and a readiness to admit a conscious immaturity of judgment on points which he has not yet fully thought out, are characteristics in which some of the highest intellectual and moral qualities blend; and they belong to him. Lord Russell, in one of those happy metaphors which now and then light up his speeches, and which will survive more ambitious flights of oratory, compared the British Constitution, with its publicity not only of result but of process, to a glass hive, in which the bees were seen at work. Something of the same sort may be said of Mr. Gladstone. All his life he has been thinking aloud. You see not only the premiss from which he has started, and the conclusion which he has reached, but the road by

which he has travelled from one to the other. Endowed with the disposition of mind which makes the true Liberal, an eager, ardent, and hopeful temper, a consuming zeal for work, a love of improvement for improvement's sake, and a certain "enthusiasm of humanity,"—Mr. Gladstone was born in the very centre of that stern and unbending Toryism of which for a short time he bore the impress. In his boyhood, Scotch Tories and Lancashire Tories were rare; but they were, as they are now, the extremest specimens of their order. Mr. Gladstone's father was a Scotch Tory by birth and education, and a Lancashire Tory by residence and association. From a home penetrated by those influences Mr. Gladstone went first to Eton and then to Oxford, an Eton and an Oxford alike unreformed. Even then signs of a Liberal tendency expressed themselves within the limits of education and party association. In one of the debates during the recent Reform controversy, Mr. Disraeli could find no

better stone to fling at his antagonist than a reminder that in the record of the debates of the Oxford Union the name of Mr. William Gladstone is found among the opponents of the Reform schemes of that day. Mr. Gladstone, professing a somewhat exaggerated penitence, explained that, being as a young man an ardent admirer of Canning, he had been carried away by Canning's hostility to Reform. The Oxford student who was among the admirers of Canning therein displayed a Toryism the reverse of stern and unbending. The fact is that the early impression of Mr. Gladstone as a stern and unbending Tory, and the later censure of him as a capricious and erratic revolutionist, are equally without foundation. True, he has traversed nearly the whole space which separates the opinions of Lord Eldon from the opinions of Mr. Bright. The distance is great; but the time taken to accomplish it has been long. Mr. Gladstone has been forty years about it, and the journey is perhaps not yet com-

pleted. He has painfully plodded over ground which others have crossed at a leap; and what has really been, and in the case of other politicians is perceived to be, one change, has, in his case, the appearance of being many, because it has been so gradual and protracted that the several parts of it have themselves seemed to be independent wholes. This fact is in part due to peculiarities of intellectual and moral character; but it has been to a great degree imposed by the necessary conditions of official life and administration. The politician who recants his subscription from one set of articles of faith in order to subscribe wholesale to another, who from a conventional Tory becomes in a moment a conventional Liberal, fails to give proof of that scrupulous patience and careful integrity which have marked Mr. Gladstone's career. On the other hand, the politician who, in adopting Liberal principles, perceives promptly their scope and bearing, and applies them through the whole circle of political life—to freedom in trade, to

equality of Churches and sects, to popular enfranchisement, and to security of independent voting—either possesses, in so far, higher political qualities, or is more favourably placed for their exercise and display, than the statesman who has to be reconverted to the same principles on every fresh application of them. This, it cannot be denied, has to some extent been Mr. Gladstone's position. He was a thorough Liberal in commercial politics while yet he was a Tory, or, at best, but a Liberal-Conservative on ecclesiastical and academic questions, and in regard to Parliamentary reform. In one respect this peculiarity is disadvantageous. A mind which is subject to periodic changes of opinion is like a country which undergoes periodic revolutions. The changes may be for the better in themselves; but they tend to unsettlement, and are unfavourable to external confidence. There are statesmen who persistently resist change; and of these Lord Salisbury is in England the most conspicuous living instance. There are

statesmen who have as consistently and persistently advocated change; and of these Mr. Bright is the most distinguished example. There are statesmen, not less useful, who continually undergo change; and to this class Mr. Gladstone belongs.

His defects as a statesman, whether they be due to original character or habits of official life, conspire to lend opportunity and effect to his special political faculties. In the power of giving legislative form to the policy on which the nation has determined, of organizing complex and difficult details into a complete and orderly scheme, and of recommending it by inexhaustible resources of exposition and illustration to Parliament, Mr. Gladstone never had a superior, or, we may venture to say, an equal. As each reform has become what, in the slang of the House of Commons, is called a practical question, Mr. Gladstone has been ready to execute the mandate of the constituencies. If he had been in advance of

public opinion, like Mr. Bright, or lagged behind it, like Lord Salisbury, he could not have discharged this essential work; and his best genius and truest strength would have lacked their opportunity. To this peculiarity of character and circumstance the fact is owing that in Mr. Gladstone's career, more than in that of any other man who has lived through the same period, the history of England during the past forty years is reflected. If he had been from the first, or early in his career, a better theoretic politician, he might have been a less useful practical statesman. If he had sooner shared Mr. Bright's views on, and zeal for, Parliamentary Reform, the great financial and commercial revolution embodied in his successive Budgets, on which Mr. Gladstone's political fame will rest most securely, might not have been accomplished. If he had been a disciple of Mr. Miall and the Liberation Society, the Irish Church and Land Acts would probably never have been passed, or would have been passed after

protracted conflict and in a less perfect shape. Mr. Gladstone's shortcomings as a speculative politician are the shadows of his merits as a practical statesman. He has been too busy in doing the nation's work to think out fully and promptly his own opinions.

To know what a man is it is necessary to know what he is not. In order to recognise what Mr. Gladstone is and has done, it is essential to define what he is not and has not attempted. No disparagement is conveyed in this negative side of criticism other than is involved in the fact that every human being is limited. To say that Mr. Gladstone is the great practical statesman of his age is to say that he is not a political pioneer in the way either of speculative thought or of popular agitation. He has accepted a special and a most honourable work, and he has discharged it under the conditions of thought and action which it carries with it—conditions involving suspension of some high faculties, and the

imperfect cultivation of a whole side of the mind. There can be little doubt that Mr. Gladstone has chosen wisely, both for his own fame, and for the interests of his country and time. What he might have achieved, if the pursuits of his leisure had been the business of his life, no one can positively say; but there is no reason to think that literature, or the higher scholarship, or theology, has suffered an irreparable loss in his devotion to a Parliamentary and administrative career. Originality is the last quality which can be attributed to Mr. Gladstone. In politics, he has taken his principles from the course of events, and from the finally prevalent opinion of the nation. It would not be correct to say that he is the Hamlet of statesmanship. If "the native hue of resolution" seems sometimes in his case to be "sickli'd o'er with the pale cast of thought," no one can pretend that "any enterprises of great pith and moment" have "with this regard their current turned awry, losing the name of action." On

the contrary, with Mr. Gladstone, impending action has been necessary to determine thought from its vague possibilities into something definite; and to decide which one of three or more courses shall be taken. In this fact, that Mr. Gladstone has always taken his principles from without, and that they have come to him upon authority, it is not difficult to see a connection between his Liberal politics and his Conservative theology. For the *vox populi* which he obeys as a statesman, he substitutes in Church matters the *vox ecclesiæ*. The Church has its democratic, as well as, and even in part through, its sacerdotal element. It claims on its human side to represent a common consent—*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. The sentence *securus judicat orbis terrarum*, which flashed conviction on Father Newman, has some affinity with Mr. Gladstone's "own flesh and blood" doctrine; and indicates that blending of popular suffrage and external authority in which his Liberal politics and

his sacerdotal theology find their common basis. Having taken his principles from without, he then applies, develops, and illustrates them in detail. When these principles are sound, as they usually have been in statesmanship, the result is fruitful in good. In scholarship and theology they have resulted in such works as "The State in its Relations with the Church," "Church Principles," and "Studies on Homer"—works which, in the ingenious development and learned illustration of fantastic and almost gratuitous assumptions, belong to the curiosities of literature. The exhaustive knowledge of Homer which is displayed in "Studies on Homer," and the "Juventus Mundi," renders it matter for regret that Mr. Gladstone's minute Homeric learning is not informed by a sounder critical spirit. The same defects, impairing the same great and conspicuous merits, display themselves in nearly all that Mr. Gladstone has undertaken in literature. How far the Oxford of his day is responsible for these

peculiarities it is easy to conjecture, but hard to determine. It was the Oxford of the Sacerdotal reaction—the Oxford of Newman, and Keble, and Pusey. If the philosophic and critical revival which followed this ecclesiastical obscurantism had been a little earlier, or if Mr. Gladstone's Oxford career had been a little later—if men like Jowett, and Stanley, and Goldwin Smith had shaped the influences to which his mind was subjected—if Kant and Hegel, Hamilton and Mill, rather than the Fathers and the "Tracts for the Times," had supplied his chief mental food, Mr. Gladstone's intellectual character might have been modified. He, perhaps, would not have found the mysteries of the Christian Faith in the Homeric Poems, nor have prompted apologies for the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed; but his scholarship might have been more philosophical, and his theology larger and more benignant. If, again, it had been in the nature of things possible that the

impulse from without, and the necessity of action which have broadened Mr. Gladstone's political creed, could have told upon his theological position, it is not beyond imagination that, instead of abetting a translation of "The Mirror for Monks," he might be welcoming the Duke of Somerset and the Bishop of Natal as allies.

The democratic vein which runs through Mr. Gladstone's character accounts for some of his defects as a Parliamentary leader. Instead of governing the country through the House of Commons, he occasionally seems disposed to govern the House of Commons through the country. He sometimes speaks as if he had an independent mandate from the nation to which its Parliamentary representatives were bound to submit. No one can say that this doctrine has ever been distinctly expressed or is consciously entertained by the Prime Minister; but phrases have been occasionally used, and a course of action has now and then been adopted, which point to the existence

of some such feeling. To this, perhaps, unrecognised estimate of the House of Commons in its relation to the Government and the country, quite as much as to any neglect of the smaller arts of party-management, may be traced his comparative failure as a Parliamentary leader. Under his conduct the machine creaks and groans, and grinds to work under a painful stress. It does not [illegible] smoothly and easily, as it did under Lord [illegible]. If, however, Mr. Gladstone is a [illegible] manager, he is a consummate [illegible]. His speeches are, it is [illegible] for the moment, and not for [illegible]. The best oratory is [illegible] high order, and to this [illegible] Mr. Gladstone's fluent and facile eloquence [illegible] book which Hamlet read, [illegible] words," and the hearer is [illegible]'s question, "But what [illegible] there always is, but it [illegible]

in a fatal copiousness of expression. Rosalind says "that very good orators, when they are out, they will spit;" a declaration which throws some light on the Parliamentary eloquence of the Elizabethan period. This expedient, however, is now impracticable, except, perhaps, in the American Congress. Lord Russell's and Lord Palmerston's substitute for it was to cough. Mr. Gladstone fills up the pauses of thought with words. If he has to make up his mind while he is on his legs whether he will or will not answer a delicate question, he will express himself somewhat after this fashion:—"The honourable gentleman, in the exercise of that discretion which I should be the last to deny to any member of this House, least of all to one so justly entitled to respect as my honourable friend, both on account of his high personal character and his long Parliamentary experience, has asked me whether the Government intends to bring in a Bill for the establishment of secular education in Ireland. Now, the

discretion which I freely concede to the honourable gentleman in regard to the proposal of this question, I must, as a member of the Government, reserve to myself in considering whether or how I shall answer the question. I have to consider it not only in itself, but in regard to the time at which it is put and the circumstances which surround the topic." Mr. Gladstone then, perhaps, will say what Lord Palmerston or Lord Russell would have said in a single sentence, that he must decline to answer it. But these defects still leave Mr. Gladstone's Parliamentary speaking without rival. None of his contemporaries has, perhaps none of his predecessors has had, his boundless stores of knowledge, his power of lucid exposition, the subtlety which enables him, as was said of Burke, to wind into his subject like a serpent, and to follow flexibly its every turn with a delicacy of language which reflects accurately the finest distinctions of thought. It is impossible to imagine a debater

more fertile in resource or readier in reply. His eloquence lacks the profound philosophy of Burke, and the play of wit and fancy which sets off the deepest truths. It would be difficult to quote from any of his speeches those scraps of aphoristic wisdom which fix themselves in the public mind, and become a possession for ever. But his oratory bears the impress of his character in the vehemence of conviction and the purity of personal motive which breathe through it. If Mr. Gladstone, through the causes which have been faintly depicted, has done less than some of his contemporaries to shape the determinations of the nation in great matters of policy, no one has done so much as he to give the most perfect legislative effect to those determinations as they have successively been arrived at.

II.

MR. DISRAELI.

MR. DISRAELI has earned a place in history; and will be remembered when many wiser and greater men are forgotten. To meet him in the long roll of English Prime Ministers is a perpetual surprise, something like that of encountering Saul among the prophets. Not that to be ranked in the list of English Prime Ministers is a sure title to fame. The Addingtons, the Jenkinsons, and the Robinsons are nearly as much political accidents, mediocrities whose high position illustrates their personal insignificance, as if they were English Lord Mayors or American Presidents. Mr. Disraeli's Premiership is of a diffe-

rent order. It will be one of the standing jokes of history, as amusing to future students of the Victorian era as to us who have had the happiness to enjoy it at first hand. It supplies the vein of comedy which runs through a momentous epoch, as the frolics of Falstaff and Prince Henry lighten the intrigues and wars of Shakespeare's chronicle plays. It is not likely to be forgotten, since what is great often attracts attention less than what is curious. A paradox, however trivial, an unsettled point, however trumpery—the sex of the Chevalier d'Eon, or the authorship of the Letters of Junius—engage men more than an important but unperplexing truth. Mr. Disraeli is a curious puzzle. Nobody ever mentions his name without a smile; nobody hears it without a corresponding smile. It awakens that sense of incongruity in the perception of which we are told that humour consists. Among the staid respectabilities of English politics, Mr. Disraeli is as Fifine at Court or turned duenna. In one

sense this is to Mr. Disraeli's credit. It shows that he has had the courage to be himself, and has not shaped his nature upon any conventional model. He has spoken and acted according to his disposition, and brought forth works and deeds after his kind. He has not suppressed or pared away his individuality into commonplace. When he has tried to do so, expelled nature has returned with a bound.

As it was at one time a received doctrine that Lord Byron sat before a mirror to paint Childe Harold, Manfred, and the Corsair, so it used to be thought by the students of the circulating library that Mr. Disraeli, at the age of twenty, had deliberately drawn his own likeness and laid down the plan of his life in "Vivian Grey." There was little portrait-painting, however, in either case. You may discern the author's character in his heroes only as, according to certain experts, you may discern a man's character in his handwriting. Lord Byron and Mr. Disraeli both

described, not what they thought they really were, but what they wished the world to think them, and the sort of tricks it would please them to play, if they had the ordering of affairs. The true explanation, both of "Vivian Grey" and of his author, is probably to be found in the interesting memoir of Isaac Disraeli, which his son wrote in 1848, and which appears as a preface to later editions of the "Curiosities of Literature." One of George Eliot's village gossips, unconsciously anticipating Mr. Galton's speculations, and illustrating the philosophical maxim that a thing can be known only through its causes, propounds the doctrine that it is impossible to account for a man unless you know his parents. In the short memoir in question Mr. Disraeli accounts for himself more satisfactorily than any formal autobiography could do. For the purpose of understanding him, it is worth all the rest of his works put together. It shows the medium, as naturalists call it, in which he was reared, the

influences which acted upon his genius and character, and against which in turn his genius and character reacted. In relating the history of his family, Mr. Disraeli supplies us with the key to his political life.

In the fifteenth century Mr. Disraeli's ancestors, under a name different from that which they subsequently bore, were settled in Spain, whence, towards the close of that century, they were driven by the persecutions of the Inquisition to seek a refuge in the territories of the Venetian Republic. "Grateful to the God of Jacob, who had sustained them through unprecedented trials, and guarded them through unheard-of perils, they assumed the name of Disraeli—a name never borne before or since by any other family, in order that their race might be for ever recognised." In 1745 Mr. Disraeli's grandfather, Benjamin Disraeli, the younger of two brothers, settled in England. Mr. Disraeli would seem not only to have received his grandfather's name, but

to have inherited from him some of his qualities. He is depicted as "a man of ardent character, sanguine, courageous, speculative, and fortunate; with a temper which no disappointment could disturb, and a brain, amid reverses, full of resource." The immigrant, as his grandson relates, made his fortune, laid out an Italian garden at Enfield, played whist with Sir Horace Mann, "ate Maccaroni which was dressed by the Venetian Consul," and sang canzonettas. He had married a daughter of his own race, who, however, "never pardoned him for his name," since it identified her with a people of whom she was ashamed, and from whom they kept aloof. As often happens in similar cases, the only son of the enterprising Jewish merchant was the very opposite of his father, a timid recluse, living among his books, simple as Goldsmith, and learned as a grammarian of the Middle Ages. His birth, as his son has pointed out, left him without relations or family acquaintance. "He

not only never entered into the politics of the day, but he could never understand them. He never was connected with any particular body or set of men; comrades of school or college, or confederates in that public life which, in England, is, perhaps, the only foundation of real friendship."

Benjamin Disraeli, the grandfather, who, but for his retirement from business before the era of the revolutionary wars and the great loans, would probably, his descendant thinks, have become a millionaire, died when the future Prime Minister of England was a lad of twelve. Reared in a home of as absolute seclusion from English society as if it had been placed in an island of the Mediterranean, with occasional glimpses, perhaps, at Enfield, of a strange society, more foreign than English, and more cosmopolitan than either, the young Disraeli must early have felt that strange sense of moral detachment from the nation in which he has lived, and in which he has attained the highest place, which is visible in his writings

and his career. In both homes he must soon have learned that his name and race placed a certain barrier between him and the distinctions to which he aspired. By a somewhat sweeping and incredible negative, he describes his grandmother as "so mortified by her social position, that she lived until eighty without indulging a tender expression." She disliked her race, and was, as Mr. Disraeli himself bears witness, ashamed of the name she bore. Mr. Disraeli deserves only praise for the contrary impulse, which has led him to assert that name and that race against ignorant and bigoted contempt. Still they set him apart. He was outside the English world; and, in spite of his intimate participation in English politics, he has been as a foreigner in them. He has understood them with a sort of external intellect; but he has never thoroughly entered into them, and has cared for them as little on their own account as his father did. Parties and questions have been with him weapons, and not

causes. He has written a formal "Vindication of the British Constitution," and in the "Adventures of Captain Popanilla" has composed one of the most caustic satires upon it that have ever appeared. He was the champion of Free Trade in his earlier books, and won party-leadership as the advocate of Protection. He has laughed at our aristocracy—in "Lothair" he laughs at them still—and has done them homage, denounced them as a Venetian oligarchy, and eulogised them as the dignified pillars on which order and liberty rest. He has been a Radical, a Tory-Radical, and a Tory without the Radical, a Conservative and a Constitutionalist; the client of Mr. Hume and Mr. O'Connell, the colleague of Lord Salisbury, the Mentor of Lord John Manners, and the chief adviser of the late Lord Derby. It may be said with truth that Mr. Disraeli has not been more inconsistent than many of his friends, and some of his opponents, and that he has gone through only such changes as

are involved in the passage from Liberalism to Conservatism, or the reverse journey. These parallels, however, are of little service. Each case must be judged by its own circumstances, and by its relation to the character, as known on other grounds, which it illustrates. Nothing certainly could be more unwarrantable than to impute deliberate insincerity to Mr. Disraeli. Men of imagination have usually a great faculty of occasional belief. According to some philosophers, vivid imagination implies momentary belief; and there is no reason for doubting that in different moods of mind Mr. Disraeli has vividly imagined the arguments for and against Free Trade, and has distinctly realised alike the merits and defects of our institutions. He has believed in them as he believed, for a few minutes one night, in the Dutch conquest of England. The sentence in which, in speaking of the Abyssinian Expedition, he described the elephants of Asia, carrying the artillery of Europe through

plains of Africa which might daunt the hardy pioneers of America, in order to plant the banner of St. George upon the hills of Rasselas, illustrates this imaginative disposition, this tendency to make realities out of fictions, which involves sometimes the counter process of converting realities into fictions. Rasselas for the moment was to Mr. Disraeli as real as the geographical elephants, artillery, plains and pioneers, and as the banner of St. George—or they were as unreal as he. Mr. Disraeli has played in the same rhetorical way with questions of English policy; and the changes which he has undergone may in part be attributed to the instability of imaginative impressions, which never amounted to intellectual convictions.

There is, however, beneath all its apparent fluctuations, a certain consistency in Mr. Disraeli's public life. He has held his opinions very loosely, but certain ideas have held him very strongly. He has been possessed by them. They are belief

in his race, in the Theocracy to which its sacred books and its history testify, and in the principle of Monarchy through which a Theocracy best exercises itself. So deeply are these ideas seated, and so constant have they been throughout his career, cropping up everywhere in his writings and speeches, that they seem to be a part of his very organism, transmitted with the blood in his veins. The same peculiarity is noticeable, on the speculative side of his mind. The Mosaic cosmogony is pitted against the development theory. The exposition in "Tancred" of the "Revelations of Chaos," and its practical conclusion, "We were fishes, and we shall be crows," foreshadowed the speech in which Mr. Disraeli placed himself on the side of Bishop Wilberforce and the angels, against Mr. Darwin and the apes. His ridicule of Bishop Colenso's assault on the Pentateuch, and his attack upon nebulous professors and the second-hand learning of estimable and amiable deans, were something more than bits of ecclesi-

astical electioneering. It was a true instinct which directed Mr. Disraeli's youthful footsteps, as it almost always, after more or less wandering, has directed his pen, to his ancestral East. There is as strong a theological element in Mr. Disraeli as there is in Mr. Gladstone. It creeps out in his memoir of Lord George Bentinck, in the form of a strange theory of the crucifixion; and, so far as they have one, it is the moral purpose of the trilogy of novels, embracing "Coningsby," "Sybil," and "Tancred." Mr. Disraeli may have received from his father the only political ideas which the elder man seems to have entertained: a belief in the Stuart dynasty and the Monarchical principles on which they acted, a hatred of the Puritans, and a distrust of Parliamentary ascendancy. These notions, with a certain patronage of the Church of England as the vehicle to this country of Asian ideas, were the doctrines which he implanted in the minds of the group of young men who, towards the close of Sir Robert

Peel's second administration, clustered round Mr. Disraeli. Young England sprang out of Old Jewry.

This detachment of Mr. Disraeli from any vital interest or absorbing conviction in English politics has in some degree contributed to his success as a Parliamentary leader. To use the phrase which Lord Russell is fond of quoting from Burke, it has enabled him more effectually to vary his means in order to obtain the unity of his end—the successful government of his party. But his want of sympathy with English life and interests has been against him; it is recognised by his followers, and prompts that constantly threatened revolt which Mr. Disraeli's skill has always hitherto staved off. His isolation is visible in his bearing in the House of Commons. He sits like a solitary gladiator waiting the signal for combat. The same peculiarity affects his eloquence also. Mr. Gladstone has described the relation of the orator to his audience by saying that he gives

back to them in a flood what he receives from them in vapour. Mr. Disraeli receives no such inspiration from his hearers, and gives them no such return. His speeches are often little more than stilted and highflown essays, couched in a Latinized diction, delivered with a certain over-emphasis, and set off with vehement but stiff gestures, as of a marionette whose wires are being somewhat too violently jerked. They are marked by a gaudiness of rhetoric which has a curious counterpart in the unequivocal admiration expressed by Mr. Disraeli in his novels, and not least in "Lothair," for splendid upholstery and fine clothes. The "gallant gay domestics," as Mr. Tennyson calls them, who bow before him at the door, cannot have a keener appreciation of their variegated liveries than the Conservative leader. It would be wrong to ascribe this strange pleasure to moral flunkeyism. It is due probably to the survival in a western climate of the Oriental relish for brilliant and startling colours. Mr.

Disraeli's emotions, as a passage in "Lothair" shows, in contemplating the contrasted hues in a fish-shop, the red of the lobster setting off the white of the turbot, are as vivid as when he gazes on diamonds and rubies or on the varieties of plush. This taste explains the tawdry finery of the more ambitious parts of his speeches. But they are always lighted up by brilliant passages of personal satire, for which his hearers patiently wait—the frequent oases reward the long journey through the desert. His descriptions of Sir Robert Peel as the great "Parliamentary middleman," or as "stealing the Whigs' clothes while they were bathing;" of Mr. Beresford Hope as the embodiment of "Batavian grace;" of Mr. Lowe in the character of the "inspired schoolboy;" of Mr. Horsman as the "superior person" of the House of Commons, happily hit off as much of a man's character as can be conveyed in a single phrase. Mr. Disraeli is a skilful and faithful party leader, who has shown, on occasion, that he can prefer

the interests of the State to the ends of party; a brilliant political satirist, a bold and dexterous Parliamentary duellist, a debater not ill-matched even with the great antagonist whom he has confronted for so many years; but not a great orator; scarcely, indeed, an orator at all. What he might have been as a statesman, if he could have had any other policy than that of the antagonists to whose sufferance he has owed his brief snatches of office, no one can tell. Mr. Disraeli's Premiership is remarkable chiefly for the fact that he was Prime Minister. His career yields the moral of the Industrious Apprentice and of books on self-help, showing that by resolution and capacity a man may become not only a Lord Mayor, a Lord Chancellor, or an Archbishop of Canterbury, but even a Prime Minister, in spite of obstacles seemingly insuperable.

III.

MR. LOWE.

MR. LOWE in a kilt, Mr. Lowe with his foot upon his native heath, and proclaiming his name to be MacGregor, is a figure for burlesque; and yet that is an attitude which our unsentimental Chancellor of the Exchequer assumed during the last recess, at Glasgow, and repeated by particular desire at the dinner of the Scottish Corporation in London. His heart is in the Highlands, though not, as he carefully assures the world, hunting the deer, since he has no taste for field sports. He blames Providence and his parents for not having made him a Scotsman, since Scotsmen always get on so well in the

world, and stick so closely to each other. It is with the parsimonious and pushing qualities of the Scotch character that he sympathizes. The reluctance to "brak' saxpence" attracts him as the custodian of the public revenues; and the way in which Caledonians back each other makes him sigh for such allies as they would have been in a career of self-advancement. One side of the national character he has not—patriotism; for an Englishman who wishes he was a Scotsman is a very poor Englishman, and would be a very contemptible Scotsman. "Breathes there the man with soul so dead," is a sentiment which is thoroughly, but not exclusively Scotch, inasmuch as it is entirely human; and Mr. Lowe, on his own showing, does not know what the lines mean. Perhaps this may be pushing Mr. Lowe's fun too far into earnest; but a man's jokes—such, for example, as the Bishop of Gloucester's gentle and delicate horse-pond recommendation—often tell the truth about him-

self to his neighbours, without his being aware of the disclosure.

Mr. Lowe is always bewailing the faultiness of his education, and the hindrances to which, as a mistaught, and in essential points an untaught man, he has been exposed in his political career. Instead of being apprenticed to a respectable trade, or sent to some school of the applied arts, as of civil engineering, it was his misfortune to be well grounded in Latin and Greek, to go to Oxford, to win prizes and scholarships, to take a first-class degree, and to become a fellow and tutor of his college. A young man thus neglected, or suffered to throw himself away upon dead languages, is, in his view, a melancholy object. Mr. Lowe is certainly an instance that the ingenuous arts do not always refine the character, and that humane letters may leave a man something of a savage. If the fault he finds with the process is due to imperfect satisfaction in his own case with the

result, there may be some agreement with him. But the truth is, that Mr. Lowe is an instance not of the effect of classical training on the mind and character, but of the failure of such training to exercise its natural effect. His scholarship, minute and elegant as it is, is rather an acquirement held by a certain external tenure, a something annexed to him from without, an ornament hung about him, than a germ sown within the mind, assimilating nutriment there, and growing and bringing forth fruit. Knowledge has not with him been transformed into wisdom. His acquaintance with the poets, orators, historians, and philosophers of Greece and Rome has supplied him with illustrations and parallels for the adornment of his speeches; but the essential thought thus attired is usually thin and poor. Mr. Lowe does not seem to be mentally richer for the rich mines in which he has worked. The barbarian is adorned with pearls and gold, but he is still a barbarian.

"The coltish nature breaks at seasons through the gilded pale." Mr. Lowe's acquirements are those of an Oxford don, or of a Scotch Dominie of the narrower order, and might have suited well enough, though they would not have best suited, the chair at Glasgow to which he once aspired.

An American humourist has apologetically remarked that there is a good deal of human nature in most men. It is Mr. Lowe's misfortune that there is very little human nature in him, and that what there is, is not of the best sort. This fact explains what Mr. Disraeli once described as his extraordinary faculty of spontaneous aversion. He starts from and grows enraged at samples of human nature which are foreign to him, like a dog or a horse which barks or shies at some inexplicable portent. He thinks they mean mischief. They come from some unknown world, and are much more likely to be "goblins damned" than "spirits of health." Mr. Gladstone's "flesh and blood" argument for the

suffrage drove him into transports of passion. Mr. Lowe is an exceedingly acute half of a man; but his mental and moral organization is incompletely developed; and the language which appeals to the missing half is so much empty rhapsody or meaningless gibberish. This defect, which has deprived his consummate scholarship of any humanising influence, and of the large and considerate wisdom which are its proper fruits, and made his attainments but as the ample knowledge of an elderly schoolboy, has left the varied training of life as little productive. Mr. Lowe, disappointed of the Glasgow chair of Greek, left the cloister for the world; Oxford for Australia. He was engaged in public and Parliamentary affairs at the Antipodes, before he entered the English House of Commons, and took a fourth-rate place in Lord Aberdeen's Government. It is remarkable, and it is at once the cause and sign of that perpetual immaturity of mind and character, that eternal

hobbledehoyhood which marks him, that Mr. Lowe's experience of the world, like his acquaintance with books, seems never to have been assimilated by him. They have never blended with each other into the Ulysses-like wisdom of a man who has "seen and known cities of men, and manners, climates, councils, governments," and become "a part of all that he has met." Mr. Lowe has always been, and, at sixty and over, he still is the sprightly, travelled, too well-informed youth, with a ready answer, often pert and shallow, for his betters, and a contempt for everything which in feeling and thought goes deeper than he does. He is rather a nondescript personage in the House of Commons. He is a reader of Plato, and he perhaps recollects in one of the dialogues a description of an ambiguous class of persons who stand on the border territory between philosophers and statesmen without being either one or the other, and who, having a modicum of philosophy and a modicum of

statesmanship, think themselves better than both philosophers and statesmen, though they are really inferior to them, fancying that they hold the first place while occupying only the third. This class of people, says Plato, are never so happy as when they can hold philosophers up to contempt as good for nothing. The impertinences with which Mr. Lowe favoured Mr. Mill in the last Parliament, recall some passages of this description; and his attitude to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, on the other hand, completes the likeness. Mr. Lowe may see himself in the sketch. "Veluti in speculum."

In 1857 Mr. Cobden advised some electors of Manchester, who were thinking of asking Mr. Lowe to stand for that great borough, to "see him and hear him before you choose him." "Hear Mr. Lowe," he went on; "I have heard him, and I will say this—and in saying it I shall be borne out by any impartial man in the House of Commons—that, considering he had

some reputation for ability at Oxford, and as a writer in the *Times*, he is the most conspicuous failure in the House of Commons." These words read strangely now; but they were said in 1857, and, with some little abatement and qualification, they remained true till 1866. Mr. Lowe had achieved a certain degree of social reputation before that time; but he had not risen to more than a secondary position in Parliament and in administration. A vote of the House of Commons had compelled him to retire from office towards the close of Lord Palmerston's last Ministry; and in the reconstruction of the Government by Lord Russell Mr. Lowe was not included. He was therefore free as an independent member to resist to the uttermost the Reform Bill of 1866, and he did so with an eagerness, a brilliancy, and an effect which made him the Parliamentary hero of the day. The success was the success of a single session; nothing in Mr. Lowe's previous career had given any promise of the faculties which he

then displayed; nothing that he has done since has exhibited the same powers of debate. "Single-speech Hamilton," who was a very able man, and made some ordinarily good speeches besides the one which has earned him his name, has a sort of parallel in single-session Lowe. There have been painters, usually not much above mediocrity, who seem to have scaled the heights of genius in a single picture; poets, ordinarily only second or third rate, whom a solitary ode or sonnet has lifted to the level of the masters of song. The year 1866 gives Mr. Lowe a place among Parliamentary orators. For the first, and for the only time in his life, he was in sympathy with the majority of his audience. He spoke from strong feelings to strong feelings. He was carried away by hate, scorn, and terror of the Reform proposals of 1866, of their authors, and of the classes whose enfranchisement was promised; and these feelings were shared by nearly the whole of the

Tory party, and by large numbers of the nominal supporters of the Government. He was the orator of a crisis of anger, distrust, and fear. It is curious that an enlargement of the franchise, far wider than any which he denounced, should have made him, for the first time, when close upon sixty, a member of the Cabinet, holding one of the greatest offices of the State; and should have relieved him from the burden of lordly patronage to which he had consented to owe his seat in the House of Commons. Mr. Lowe exchanged a small nomination borough for the University of London in the interval between his resignation of the Vice-Presidency of the Committee of Council in Lord Palmerston's Administration and his appointment to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer in Mr. Gladstone's. The Reform Bill of 1867 came between; and household suffrage effected this deliverance; but, like some slave populations, he ignorantly resisted his deliverer. Mr. Bright

once expressed his gratitude to Mr. Lowe's patron, that whereas he might have sent his butler to the House of Commons, he had been kind enough to depute a great intellectual gladiator. Perhaps, in Mr. Lowe's rhapsodies over the glorious struggles of the two great aristocratic parties, of one of which he was content to be the retainer, and in his desire to uphold them against the incursions of a levelling democracy, there was something of the spirit of the servants' hall. Did he feel himself bound to represent his unfortunate rival, the disappointed butler?

Mr. Lowe has scarcely, perhaps, sustained during the past half-dozen years the political and oratorical reputation which he earned in the memorable year 1866. But he has maintained himself in a position far higher than that which had previously been assigned to him. The credit of the great displays of the Reform controversy remains with him; and an indefinite reserve of

power is attributed to him, which increases the attention and respect with which he is listened to. It has ensured him an audience, and has given him confidence. Mr. Lowe lacks the physical qualities of an orator. He is a shambling, hurried speaker, who goes back upon his words, and slurs his points, as if he were half-afraid and half-ashamed of them. He resembles rather a man dictating to an amanuensis than one addressing an audience. Simplicity and directness of thought, keenness of expression, and fertility of illustration drawn by an exact memory from varied reading, give his speeches an interest which overcomes even to the listener the imperfect medium through which they reach him. He is often clear by the evasion rather than the solution of difficulties. He is in no way embarrassed by depth of feeling, by subtlety of thought, or by thick-swarming fancies. He wields a few simple ideas and principles, which it is comparatively easy to arrange and apply. Indeed, so far as a single instance can

do so, Mr. Lowe's mind and character directly invalidate a favourite theory of the late Sir William Hamilton's, of Edinburgh, to whom, as a Scotsman, Mr. Lowe will pay some deference. He exhibits the weaknesses and limitations which Hamilton considered to be the natural result of a too exclusive mathematical training, and none of the largeness of view and discriminating delicacy of perception which Hamilton believed to be the natural consequences of literary and philological studies. Mathematicians, according to the Edinburgh professor, reasoning from premisses certain in themselves to conclusions which follow rigidly from them, move along a single line of thought like a railway in its grooves. They argue correctly for the same reason, to adopt Hamilton's illustration, as a man walks straight in a ditch. In human life, however, you do not go from certainty to certainty. You have to pick your way amid conflicting probabilities. The task of interpreting a text, and of discriminating the nicer

shades of an author's meaning, is an exercise in this refined perception of probabilities, and a valuable preparation for that moral and intellectual discrimination which the successful conduct of life requires at every step; while the materials which the great masters of literature and thought afford enlarge immensely the grounds and aids of moral judgment. Sir William Hamilton's disparagement of the disciplinary value of mathematics was probably due to an imperfect conception of their scope; and Mr. Lowe is a proof that classical scholarship does not necessarily involve the delicacy and discrimination which are attributed to it. Mr. Lowe as a politician is essentially of the narrow mathematical type. From arbitrary premisses, economical and political, which are only half true to start with, and which, for their proper application, need sometimes to be limited, sometimes to be enlarged by other truths which Mr. Lowe leaves wholly out of account, he reasons rigidly to results which offend common sense and

a larger reason. He fancies that with a petty Q. E. D. he can demolish facts staring him in the face. Like the first cosmic speculators, Mr. Lowe in politics seeks to develop everything out of a single principle; but the world and human nature are a great deal more complex than he dreams, and require perceptions more discriminating and a handling more delicate than his. As some cosmogonists create the universe out of nothing, so he resolves the duty of Government into that of leaving things alone. A few cut and dried principles, and a few rules of thumb, comprehend for Mr. Lowe the art and science of administration and legislation.

A keen, forcible, narrow mind, a scornful and cynical temper, and a faculty of epigrammatic expression and of ludicrous illustration, are the qualities with which Mr. Lowe has made his mark in public life. As a Finance Minister, he has shown excessive ingenuity and imperfect good sense. His frugality is often profligate. He

understands, with the Roman orator and statesman, what a large revenue may be found in parsimony; but he does not perceive that a larger revenue lies in wise and productive expenditure. He is like a husbandman who should store up instead of sowing his seed corn; or a peasant who hides his guineas in an old stocking instead of putting them out at interest. In business, Mr. Lowe lacks a perception of relative magnitudes. He has no sense of the comparative importance of things, and will fasten on subjects which should be left to clerks, and will remit to clerks what he ought to keep in his own hands. But whatever may be thought of Mr. Lowe, he has been true to himself; and this is to his credit, though it might be wished that the self to which he is true were in some respects other than it is. Perhaps it is different from what it appears. Mr. Lowe probably has many excellent and amiable qualities which he has never disclosed to the public. He certainly has the courage of his opinions in their bold as-

sertion, and in their thorough application within the limits of the discretion allowed to him. At the same time no one can charge him with insensibility to the necessity of compromise in action. His support of the Irish Land Act, after his speech on Mr. Chichester Fortescue's Bill of 1866, proves that even Mr. Lowe's political economy—to him a sacred science—may be sacrificed to Mr. Lowe's political exigencies; and the Irish University Bill of 1873 will show how far the quondam champion of the Queen's Colleges and of united secular education is constant to his old promises and convictions.

IV.

MR. BRIGHT.

IN one of his speeches at Birmingham, Mr. Bright described himself as having, during the quarter of a century over which his public life then extended, endured measureless insult, and passed through hurricanes of abuse. This is true enough, but perhaps it is not the greatest misfortune which has attended him through his public career. He has been subject to flattery as coarse and undiscriminating as the vituperation which has assailed him. He has been the off-scouring of one section of his countrymen, and the idol of another. While he was being denounced in England as a mischievous demagogue,

bent on stirring up class against class, he was worshipped in America as having reached the loftiest point to which British statesmanship had attained. He was sneered at on the one hand as a mere platform declaimer and mob orator, and was held up on the other as a master of the purest and most lofty eloquence ever exhibited in or out of the British Senate. Public opinion has wisely retreated from these opposite extravagances; and there is more danger, perhaps, of Mr. Bright's real services and high qualities of intellect and character being smothered in meaningless eulogium than of their being defaced by the spatterings of angry vituperation.

During three years Mr. Bright has been an involuntary absentee from Parliamentary life. "I shall not know the House of Commons without Sir Robert Peel," said Macaulay, when his re-election for Edinburgh restored him to his old place there. The Reformed House of Commons has scarcely been itself without Mr. Bright. His

accustomed seat below the gangway has lacked him, and his absence was even less conspicuous when his place was empty than when it was filled by some veteran Leaguer, or some perfervid Home Ruler from the upper benches. The portly figure and the lion-like head caught the glance of all strangers; and "Bright" was pointed out with pride by the habitués or the attendants of the place. The time is probably approaching when he will be seen there again; when visitors will comment on the sharp, decisive gestures with which the member for Birmingham accompanied his talk to his neighbour; and watch for the quick, nervous glance towards the Chair, and the slight movement which seldom failed to catch at once the eye of the Speaker, and to arrest the attention of the House, as he rose to take part in the debate. Whatever differences of opinion might exist in the House of Commons with respect to Mr. Bright as a politician, there never was any question as to his consummate ability as

an orator. The emptiest House—if perchance he rose in an empty House, which he was seldom prone to do—speedily filled when he was known to be on his legs. Beginning in low and measured tones, with a sort of conversational hesitation in the opening sentences, he speedily rose to animation. The first condition of his success was this—that business was the backbone of his speeches. They were always animated by a purpose which was clear to himself, and which he never failed to make clear to his hearers. No one could fail to know what he was driving at.

Though essentially a plain speaker, both in the literary and in the moral meaning of the phrase, there can be no greater mistake than to suppose that he is (if one may still speak in the present tense) a rude or unpolished one. In one sense, he is the most cultivated speaker in the House of Commons, inasmuch as he has most elaborately and successfully trained his natural gifts of eloquence. A presence which fills the eye, a

voice which at once takes the ear, and a slow and deliberate utterance which seems to choose the best word, and to watch its effect in order that he may so choose and place the next as to heighten, or, if need be, to soften and qualify the impression of the first, compel attention and interest. Mr. Bright's power of convincing does not lie so much in strict logic—he does not often affect the forms of logic, though his speeches never want the substance of it—as in the submission of the essential elements of a question to sagacious common sense and right feeling. Nothing can be better fitted than his words to his thought. The best answer to the imputation that he is un-English in character might, perhaps, be found in his language, which is more thoroughly and racily English than that of any speaker in either House. It combines in happy blending alike the simple and the dignified elements of our tongue. Mr. Bright, if he has not as much wit as Mr. Disraeli, has a great deal more humour; he has as much

earnestness as Mr. Gladstone, with more self-possession; and he has a simplicity of pathos, and an occasional grandeur, scorn, and indignation, which belong to neither. No orator has contributed to the public stock more images and phrases that will live than Mr. Bright. Mr. Disraeli as the mountebank, with a pill for the earthquake, and Mr. Lowe and Mr. Horsman as the Scotch terrier party of which no one could tell the head from the tail, belong now to history as completely as the Adullamites and the fancy franchises to our political vocabulary. Few things finer have ever been uttered by any orator than Mr. Bright's appeal to the rival leaders to lay aside their animosities in order to seek a remedy for the wrongs of Ireland, than the passage in which he described the angel of death visiting the homes to be desolated by the Crimean war, or than the moral dignity of the sentences in which he vindicated his own career at Birmingham. Mr. Bright, even in his boldest

flights, and most passionate appeals, is always master of himself. He is never carried away by any gusty impulses. The fact that his speeches have been comparatively few in number, and are usually in parts at least the result of careful preparation, certainly does not place him on a level inferior to that of more copious and frequent orators, unless the man whom Horace mentions, who made two hundred verses in an hour standing upon one leg, thereby proved himself a greater poet than he would be who, following the Latin poet's precept, should have a masterpiece nine years in hand.

Mr. Bright, as has been said, is a cultivated speaker in the manner and form of his eloquence. Want of culture cannot certainly be imputed to him in its substance. There are, it is true, very few Latin quotations in Mr. Bright's speeches, and, probably, no Greek ones at all. But they abound in allusions and illustrations derived from the masterpieces of English literature, and espe-

cially of English poetry, and show traces of considerable historic and general reading. The Bible, Milton, and Spenser seem to have been Mr. Bright's favourite works. Literature of moral elevation and pathos, rather than that of every-day life—Milton rather than Shakespeare—appears to have formed his mental food and refreshment. What is severe and stern is sometimes qualified by a certain tone as of the man of the world, remote from priggishness and pedantry, and by a touch of pleasantry. Nevertheless, the chief defect of Mr. Bright's oratory is a certain failure in variety both of thought and of manner. He lacks the sparkling fancy and vivacity of Sheridan and Canning. Those metaphors, blending poetry and philosophy with oratory, in which Burke's speeches abound, and which reveal depths of meaning and a delicacy of discrimination beyond the range of the proposition they enforce, have no counterpart in Mr. Bright's eloquence, which is often sombre, and apart from

the animation given to it by tone and gesture, slightly monotonous. The bitter and vehement things which Mr. Bright has sometimes said savour of the Puritanic temper, which is prone to confound error with wilful wrong-doing, and to smite it as with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. There has been some controversy—a one-sided controversy of course—of a modern with an ancient author, on the nice question whether rhetoric may be better likened to the closed fist and logic to the open hand, or whether the illustration should be reversed? Mr. Bright's rhetoric, at least, has certainly a great deal of the clenched fist in it; and when it exhibits the open hand, it is usually to administer a slap in the face. He appears occasionally to have taken as much pains to conceal real moderation under a form of violence as other men have done to hide their violence under a mask of moderation. There has, however, been much exaggeration in the imputations made against him on this head. The

extremest things which he has said may be paralleled in the language of his predecessors. In the days of the struggle of the first Reform Bill, Lord John Russell and Sir John Hobhouse used words as threatening as any employed by Mr. Bright; and the same might be said of Fox and Grey before them, to say nothing of the virulent abuse from Tory squires of which Mr. Bright himself has been the object. But the fact is, that Mr. Bright's antagonists have often read their own heated passions into his speeches; and some of them have had the candour to acknowledge that language which, in the newspaper reports and in the sharpness of conflict, appeared to be unjustifiably vehement, loses that character in the printed volume and in calm historic retrospect.

Mr. Bright has said, in more than one of his speeches, that the title of Statesman has been so much abused, that he has never very eagerly coveted it. Yet, in a certain real, though limited

sense, Mr. Bright is a statesman. He is the statesman of a class struggling towards direct participation in affairs, and of a policy, militant through the greater part of his career, but towards its close, and mainly through and by that career, substantially triumphant. In the intellectual and moral qualities of political foresight and fertile resource which the word statesman expresses, it belongs to him, perhaps, more accurately than to most of his contemporaries. Of course, if statesmanship means or requires the tenure of office; if a statesman is essentially a man whose name is on the back of Bills destined to become law; if the word applies only to the skilful executive instrument of legislation; in other words, if a Parliamentary adapter is a statesman, Mr. Bright has slender title to the name. He held office but for a few months, just long enough to crown by his presence in the Cabinet some of his own most important works, and to symbolize the national recognition of the real character of

his labours. In this fact lies the justification of the claim made in his behalf to the title of statesman. The statesman is a mid-term, so to speak, between the speculative thinker in politics and the mere executive or legislative instrument, the accident of a party or a Ministry, of a combination or an intrigue, who simply registers and effects the decision of the nation. The speculative thinker, looking far backward into causes and far forward into effects, is usually lost to his contemporaries in the past which he explores or in the future which he foreshadows. The Minister of the day, or at least of our day, deals only with the exigencies and possibilities of the moment. The statesman takes into his view the problems of the generation in which he lives, the actual conditions of society and the reforms which are most urgent, the questions which are unsettled and the methods and details of settlement. If the word statesman is to mean anything else and anything more than office-holder and Parlia-

mentary middle-man, it must mean as much as this; and in this sense the title belongs to Mr. Bright quite as much as to some people who seem disposed to monopolize it.

Some critics of Mr. Bright represent him as having, through the accident of birth, early associations, and business pursuits, started in life with the political creed of the Radicals of the period immediately posterior to the first Reform Bill, and as having adhered to it without enlargement or modification through his career. He was fortunate, it is said, in the fact that the tendency of the time set in favour of these ideas. Casting in his lot with them, he shared in their triumph, hastening it, perhaps, but not effecting it, by the splendid passion of his masterly eloquence. Chance would have him king, and chance crowned him, if not without, yet not altogether through his stir. If Mr. Bright had been a peer or a country gentleman, instead of a Lancashire Quaker and manufacturer, we are told, his

opinions and conduct would probably have been very like those of the late Lord Derby, Lord Salisbury, or Mr. Gathorne Hardy. What might have been, if things had been different, it is impossible to say. No doubt early associations and impressions have a strong hold upon Mr. Bright's feeling and imagination, and through them on his understanding and will. But, taking Mr. Bright as he is, it is indisputable that he has discerned with keenness the questions of the time, and not simply discerned the questions but prompted the answers. Not only in the Corn Laws and in the restriction of the suffrage, and the coercion or corruption of the voter, but also in the condition of Ireland and in that of India, and in much of our inherited system of foreign and colonial policy—the policy of interference and of guarantees—he has placed his hands upon the wounds of the Empire, and suggested the curative treatment. His therapeutics have been as sound as his diagnosis. The Irish measures of the

present Government were, in some of their main provisions, sketched out and recommended by Mr. Bright, when to hint at such projects was to challenge vituperation as an incendiary, a despoiler, and a communist. The Church-rate question was adjusted on the basis of a compromise suggested by him. His speeches on India contain the outlines of a scheme for reconstructing the Government of that great dependency. The late Treaty of Commerce with France is said to have its origin in a suggestion of his. More than half-a-dozen years ago he proposed Arbitration on the Alabama differences, when no Minister would listen to the project. It needs not be said how complete the confirmation of his judgment has been on the issue of the Southern Rebellion, on which so many official persons went wildly wrong. The impolicy of the Russian War, denunciation of which cost him his seat, has been practically acknowledged by a Government, some of whose members were parties to the conflict.

On domestic questions, instead of mere abstract principles equally applicable to all times, or equally inapplicable to any, Mr. Bright has always pointed to definite action, called for by the actual conditions of affairs, and to be reached by specific and assigned means. In the Reform agitation, he sketched out a plan for the redistribution of seats, which, if we may judge from some indications, has a good chance of being accepted as a safe middle-path between the present arrangement and the sweeping and systematic change insisted on by some younger Reformers. He laboured for the extension of the franchise less as an end in itself than as an instrument of the other reforms which have followed or promise to follow it. If he had contended for it as a "right of man" he would not have limited his demand to household suffrage, nor qualified that by safeguards against the *residuum*.

If this estimate of Mr. Bright as a politician be correct, it is difficult to say which of two oppo-

site views is the more absurd; that which represents him as a common-place Radical of the Joseph Hume type, with an extraordinary gift of eloquence; or that which dresses him up as a great revolutionary character, thrown away upon settled and orderly times. Mr. Bright is essentially a sagacious English politician; with views larger and wider than those of hand-to-mouth Ministers, but narrower than those of speculative thinkers; fertile in resources and expedients, and not indisposed to compromise in unessential points in order to secure a freer assent to what is essential. No Tory, sitting behind Mr. Gathorne Hardy, or side by side with Mr. Newdegate, has expressed more unreasonable distrust or alarm than Mr. Bright has shown of the theories of Mr. Mill and his disciples. No one is less disposed than he to legislate for the possible requirements of a future generation. His eye and thought are fixed upon the definite wants of the present time, as interpreted truly, but partially and narrowly,

by the views of the Manchester school. In itself, this limitation implies a defect of intellectual character. Mr. Bright's range of political ideas is but a small segment of the entire circle of political thought and action. His indifference to what lies beyond them, and is necessary to complete them, has often been exhibited in a manner more exasperating to his friends than to his enemies. But for the special work which Mr. Bright has had to do, the loss to him has been gain to the world. The absurd impression of Mr. Bright as a revolutionist is due in part to imprudent outbursts of his own, but still more to imputations unscrupulously cast upon him by the defenders of particular interests, who wish to associate antagonism to them with antagonism to all social order, and most of all, perhaps, to the idea that an agitator is necessarily a revolutionary demagogue. If, however, an eminent writer in the *Quarterly Review* is right in his doctrine that Ministers and Parliaments, instead of ruling and

persuading the popular power, now simply do its bidding and its work—if the task of persuasion and ruling is to be done out of doors, the functions of statesmanship lie there quite as much as with the obedient instruments in St. Stephen's.

V.

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.

LORD SALISBURY is one of the most striking and, in a certain sense, one of the most pathetic figures in modern political life. He is a hopeless statesman, or is animated only by such hope as is too like despair to impose on prudence the painful necessity of smothering it. An artist might take him for a picture of forlorn suspense, or as the central figure in the representation of a dauntless struggle against overwhelming odds. There is a certain grimness of aspect about him, as of the leader of a lost cause resolved to fight on, though well assured that nothing but defeat awaits him. He is a political Prometheus, whose

breast the Radical vulture tears, an Ajax defying the lightning, an Ixion on his wheel, anything which symbolizes defiance, and resistance to a power with which it is vain to contend; or he may be compared to Enoch Arden upon his desert island—"a shipwreck'd sailor waiting for a sail; no sail from day to day." Lord Salisbury is waiting for a phantom or foundered vessel, the Conservative Reaction, which does not heave in sight, to bear him from exile. "It cometh not," he saith; "I am aweary, aweary." He is at war with the tendencies of his age. He has set himself seriously to do that which the late Lord Derby undertook as a mere matter of phraseology, and in a lightness of heart as blithe as M. Emile Ollivier's, and that is to stem the tide of democracy. This he essays, not with Lord Derby's reserved intention of going along with the tide if it should prove the stronger, but with a misgiving that, after all, he cannot stem it, but that it will sweep him away. His attitude is that of some heroic

watchman upon a dike in Holland, when the sea threatens to break in; and no one but himself will perceive the danger. Lord Salisbury is animated by false alarms, but they are true to him; and while the peril is in his view real and close at hand, the rescue is distant and problematical. The Conservative Reaction may not come at all, or it may come too late to save anything. It is a fancy with which his imagination plays; an illusion which does not deceive him, a day-dream of which he perceives the flimsiness. In the meantime, his resolute integrity and almost cynical candour will not allow him to make any compromise with the false principle which is in the ascendant. He will not burn incense to it, or enter on its service; but will only and always resist and expose it.

Circumstances which would have made the career of any other man of at all equal, or even of much inferior capacity, have been fatal to Lord Salisbury. They have probably forfeited

him his place in history. He will always be a conspicuous figure in the Parliamentary skirmishes of his time; but a member of Parliament is like an actor—he is forgotten when he is off the stage. Lord Salisbury was intended to play, for good or for evil, a heroic part; and he has been reduced to commonplace. Under a despotic Government Lord Salisbury might possibly have been a wise and beneficent ruler. He would even now, it is most likely, be a first-rate Viceroy of India. In France, had he been Minister forty-two years ago, he certainly would have overturned the throne as Polignac did; but he would probably have made the very principle of Monarchy so odious as to have anticipated in July, 1830, the Republic of February, 1848. In Prussia, a few months ago, as a member of the House of Lords, he might have led an opposition to Bismarck, which would have made a blank tablet of existing institutions, and introduced the spectral figure of the Revolution, which haunts his dreams

and his waking hours too. The inheritance of a great name and a historic peerage, and of immense wealth and social influence, has made him simply a Parliamentary gladiator and critic. He cannot become the administrative or legislative instrument of the convictions of his countrymen, because he does not share them, and is too honest to affect to share them; he has not even such sympathy with the ideas of his age and country as would enable him to influence them. He cannot lead the party of resistance; for there is really no party of resistance. There is a Conservative majority (so calling itself) in the House of Lords, which applauds his attacks on the Ministry, which is delighted with his often very just and searching criticisms of their legislative and administrative blunders, and which assents in the abstract to the maxims of policy he lays down; but which for six months of office would do all, and more than all, it has denounced, and would cap reform by revolution.

Hence Lord Salisbury's tears; and hence the mission that he has undertaken. He knows that there is no party of resistance in England; and he has set himself to create one. A few years ago he had persuaded himself that it was all Mr. Disraeli's fault, and that, once rid of him, the Conservative party would resume its old function in English political life. He has since enlarged his studies of history, and has discovered that the sinister tactics which he regarded as the invention of Mr. Disraeli were pursued before him by the Duke of Wellington, by Sir Robert Peel, and by the late Lord Derby, if, indeed, as a Minister, the late Lord Derby can be distinguished from Mr. Disraeli. But the lesson which he might have learned from those long-delayed researches has apparently not been brought home to him. When he finds four men so different as the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Derby, and Mr. Disraeli pursuing, through nearly half a century, a similar course on each great

public question as it arises; when he finds that in office the Conservative party invariably carries out the Liberal policy, and that the question is simply one of instruments—Wellington or Grey, Peel or Russell, Disraeli or Gladstone—the doubt might present itself to a mind even less acute than his, whether any elimination of distrusted leaders, or any manipulation of parties, can produce a change. The spirit of the time, or to narrow the phrase to more apprehensible limits, the definite convictions and the indefinite feelings of all classes of Englishmen, set in a particular direction—the direction of what we should call Liberal, and what Lord Salisbury calls revolutionary ideas. The Conservative party, though the fact is concealed from them by the inheritance of party phrases and the impulses of opposition, really share these ideas; they make only a mock resistance out of office, or if the resistance is strenuous, then it is merely to prepare the way for an absolute capitulation when they are in

what they are pleased to call power, and when responsibility for the actual administration of affairs strips off their illusions. If this be not the true account of their conduct, we cannot suggest any other reconcilable with personal or political honour. This fact, if it be recognised as one, explains Lord Salisbury's position. Although he sits on the front Opposition bench in the House of Lords, and lends the Duke of Richmond his best help in the annoyance of the Ministry, he is practically outside both parties. He is a solitary statesman. A close union could only be effected in one or other of two ways; either by his declining into the tactics of acquiescence pursued by Wellington, Peel, Derby, and Disraeli, or by his impressing his convictions and purposes upon the Conservative party, and in the first instance, of course, upon the Conservative majority in the Peers. The result in the latter case would be a conflict between the two Houses, and a reproduction here of the crisis through which Prussia

has just passed, and from which political prudence extricated England forty years ago. Lord Salisbury deserves honour, if for no other reason than that he has the courage, very rare in these times, to be himself. But he is not content with this: he wishes that the Tory Peers and squires should be himself too. He thinks he can convert his character into their policy; and that because he has the courage to breast the tide of public opinion, or to stand aside and let it float others to place, he can impose this stoical attitude upon that average mass of English human nature which is called the Conservative party. It would be as easy to transform common clay into cast-iron or Bessemer steel.

The secret of Lord Salisbury's "stern and unbending Toryism"—that which differentiates it from the pliant Conservatism of his political neighbours—lies in his deep-seated scepticism as to human nature, and his desponding views as to the course and tendencies of society. We have,

he seems to say, an existing social order, perhaps not very good in itself, certainly not the best conceivable. But it has this advantage over all possible rivals, that it exists and they do not. A sort of secondary English nature has adapted itself to the laws and institutions which we find among us; the habits of men recognise these old restraints. Remove them, and the secondary English nature goes with them. The state of primitive nature, which in Lord Salisbury's theory, as in that of Hobbes, is a state of war, returns, and the aboriginal savage leaps forth. Lord Salisbury has apparently been a close student of the first French Revolution; and its wild horrors and follies, and the century almost of unsettlement which has followed, have had a sort of terrible fascination for him. But his studies here also do not begin early enough. He fails to perceive that it was the blindness of obstinate resistance which brought about the French Revolution, and that the tactics of timely concession

which have been pursued by Wellington and Peel, by Derby and Disraeli, and which he laments and denounces, have preserved England. We agree with him that these statesmen would have exhibited a higher political morality if they had supported in opposition the measures which they denounced until they found it convenient to propose them in office. But this question of personal and party ethics being put aside, there can be no doubt that Mr. Disraeli and his predecessors in the Premiership have been more truly Conservative statesmen than Lord Salisbury. The moral, or, as old writers would call it, the complexional scepticism which is the intellectual ground of Lord Salisbury's Toryism is no new phenomenon. It was exhibited before him by Hobbes and Bolingbroke, by Gibbon and Hume, though in their case it was combined with a religious scepticism which is foreign to Lord Salisbury's convictions and habits of mind. His attitude more resembles that of Father Newman and divines of

his school, who find the only refuge from bewildering doubt or positive disbelief in the peremptory authority and definite dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church. The whole social order, in his view, is divided but by a thin crust from the abyss. The stable and regular rests upon the tumultuous and chaotic. The certainties are at the surface, the uncertainties are below. Lord Salisbury does not believe that the human nature out of which the present adjustment of affairs has sprung would, in case of disturbance, secrete institutions and usages as suitable to it. The England of the present day is the result of a chapter of accidents; and he has no confidence that accident will be as favourable if we trust ourselves to it again. Defending English institutions, not on the ground that they are in harmony with reason and justice, but because they exist, any reform basing itself on reason and justice is especially distasteful to him, inasmuch as these principles admit of revolutionary applications. The smallest

change is a denial of the argument of a right to perpetuity from the fact of existence; and the more insignificant it appears, the more insidious and dangerous it is. This attitude of mind is impressed on Lord Salisbury's speeches and writings. He stands always on the offensive. It is not efficient pleading for an institution to say merely that it exists, which is usually all that Lord Salisbury is disposed to say for it; but it is often a telling argument against a proposed change that it disturbs a present arrangement, and carries within itself the germs of greater disturbances; that it is dangerous in going so far and inconsistent in not going farther than it does.

In this kind of argument, which is but the political application of the weapons skilfully wielded by the more recent Roman Catholic apologists, Lord Salisbury is a master. A keenly analytic mind, and a style cultivated by literary practice, give wonderful effect to his trenchant criticisms, which make up in directness for what,

according to Mr. Disraeli, they lack in finish. Lord Salisbury is, indeed, intellectually too sincere to take much pains in polishing his invectives and sarcasms. He said, in a recent speech at Manchester, that it was his aim in all his words to speak out his own mind simply and truthfully; and that, though what he thought might sometimes be wrong-headed and absurd, still, being what he thought, he did more good by expressing it, and letting it serve as an element in the formation of a right public judgment, than by paring it down or dressing it up to suit the views of others. This is very laudable; but it is matter for regret that the self which he expresses is not a larger and more sympathetic one, and that in the formation of his opinions that wisdom of all the world, which is usually better than the wit of any one man, goes for so little. In honourably refusing any half-honest surrender of individual conviction to public opinion, Lord Salisbury is in some danger of shrinking into a starved and nar-

row and defiant egotism. It is a misfortune that he has never been placed in a position which would overcome or counteract his native difficulty of understanding the majority of his countrymen. Among the *benè nati* and *benè vestiti*, but *mediocriter docti*, who form the select society of All Souls, at Oxford; and as a representative who never had a constituency, for the member for Stamford is practically member for "Burleigh-house by Stamford town," Lord Salisbury has had little opportunity for knowing his fellow-countrymen, or learning to abate that scorn of them to which his temperament and his habits as a man of letters incline him. That scorn, it must be admitted, is impartially distributed over all ranks. If his distrust seems greatest of the labouring classes, it is probably because, in his view, they are held to good behaviour by less powerful artificial restraints, and by a less developed second nature than the upper and middle classes. He seems, indeed, to be haunted by the image of

Mr. Odger and Mr. Bradlaugh leading a revolutionary mob into Hatfield Park, and committing the Elizabethan mansion again to the flames. Lord Salisbury's unchecked individuality makes him an interesting subject of political study, but it almost disqualifies him for modern statesmanship. His revolt against Liberal policy and Conservative tactics is a revolt against the very conditions of Constitutional Government. While he remains what he is, he can never be the leader of the Conservative party. In conceivable, but almost impossible, circumstances, he might be the chief of a counter-revolution.

VI.

LORD DERBY.

IF any one were asked to describe Lord Derby in a monosyllable, the answer would probably be that he was a "safe" statesman. The characters which observers of life have drawn, from Theophrastus downwards, do not include, so far as we know, any sketch of the "safe" man; and yet this type of human nature must have been familiar to all ages. Usually the "safe" man, when he is placed in a position of authority during a time of danger, is associated with the gravest calamities that can befall a State; because the path of safety often lies in some direction little thought of, and apparently fenced round with

perils. Nicias is, perhaps, one of the earliest types of the safe man; and he is responsible for the greatest disaster of Greek history. Lord Derby, as we have hinted, is the favourite type of the "safe" man in modern England; and he is the last person whom in a crisis of national danger any one would think of calling to the conduct of affairs. The very epithet is an expression of timidity. It could never arise in a time or country bent upon any great enterprise. A "safe" General would be an equivocal expression, and would represent a doubtful title to confidence. The late Sir Charles Napier was thought to have made but a lame boast when he vaunted his prowess during the Russian war, in bringing his ships home from the Baltic uninjured. The ambition simply to keep a whole skin has never been productive of great things. The term "safe," as it is applied in modern politics, depicts a contrast. It is usually intended to disparage the imputed rashness and originality of others. It

denotes the trepidation of vested interests which are afraid of being touched, of old settlements which shrink from being disturbed, of venerable associations which are threatened with profanation. The beneficiaries of abuses and vested wrongs, by a well-known figure of speech, call Lord Derby "safe" because they think they would be safe under him. The term is applied to him, as if he were a sort of harbour of refuge from Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli. A harbour of refuge is a very useful and necessary thing; but a vessel which is always there will not give a good account of its cargo. In sluggish and timid moments England may be disposed to put into that port for rest and repairs; but she will not remain there long, unless, like some of her unused ships, she is to rot and fall in pieces.

When a man is designated, by way of eulogy, as safe, it is usually because he has no more impressive quality which appeals to popular sympathy and imagination, and because the conception of

public duty which animates those who bestow on him the name, does not go beyond that of avoiding risks. No one thinks of calling Cromwell or Chatham "safe" statesmen; because the attributes which made them so were simply the background on which greater qualities were painted, and the instruments of achievements from which conventionally safe-statesmanship would have shrunk. "Safe" statesmen do not save or raise their country. With some insight into character, though without having perfectly analyzed what he perceived, a foreign critic has said that if Columbus had been half as sensible as the present Lord Derby, he would never have discovered America. The difference in the two cases is not, however, in the greater or less amount of common sense, or at any rate the difference is not that Lord Derby has more and Columbus had less; but in the different materials on which the mere critical and regulative faculties of judgment worked, in the one case clearing the intuitions of

genius and guiding the impulses of heroism; in the other, determining the conclusions which a somewhat level and prosaic mind derives from the Blue Books, the Statistical Returns, and the Social Science Reports of his generation. No one has a more profound distrust of the political Columbuses of our time than Lord Derby; and to minds like his own his refutation of their projects is unanswerable, and full of consolation.

Lord Derby has in all probability many years of public life before him, which are sure to be respectable and useful; but which do not promise a really great, still less a brilliant, career. There is the half of a true statesman in him, but, for lack of the other half, it is likely to be comparatively unproductive. A malign fortune has distributed over two generations and heads of the House of Stanley the qualities which if they had been concentrated in one would have given, perhaps, its greatest statesman since Chatham to England. If the present Lord Derby had the

imagination, the impulse, and the eager combative spirit of his father; or if the father had had the knowledge, the candour, and the sober judgment of his son, all rivalry would have been driven out of the field. As it is, each has lacked more completely than is usual the special gifts of the other, and the physical dissimilarity which was apparent through the strange family resemblance of voice and feature illustrated this mental and moral contrast. If we were to apply the doctrine and language of the older psychology, which distinguished three souls in the same organization—an animal, a rational, and a spiritual soul—we might say that the present Lord Derby differs from his predecessor by the lack of the higher or more spiritual soul. The ethereal fire seems to be withdrawn; and the whole nature is heavier with a grosser clay. He is his father with all the "go" taken out of him, and a good deal of solid stuff put into him. Instead of the Rupert of debate, whose ringing

and flashing words seemed almost to anticipate his thoughts, so that the orator did not know what he was going to say until he was "going" to say it no more and had actually said it, and whose own voice seemed to convey his meaning to him and to his hearers simultaneously,—we have a speaker who never trusts himself without paper, who is incapable apparently of uttering half a dozen continuous sentences unless they are before him in round text or in clear print, whose Ministerial answers to questions were always more or less furtively read, and whose longer speeches are essays as carefully prepared as if they were intended for the *Quarterly Review* instead of for the House of Lords or the platform. The late Lord Derby plunged into debate, eager to "drink delight of battle with his Peers," careless of the blows he received, and thinking only of the strokes he gave. The present Lord Derby is almost a non-combatant even in the very thick of the fight, in which he makes his appearance like

a herald with a proclamation. He reads messages to the House as if he were a President; and is a sort of Reporter (in the French, not in the English sense) on every question that arises. His laboriously collected facts and his carefully drawn and guarded inferences almost demand the written form in which he puts them for oral delivery.

The late Lord Derby was probably the last specimen—there has been none certainly since him—of the purely aristocratic statesman. His temper and prejudices were no doubt common to him with many of his party; but only in his case were they associated with the genius and force of character which made them conspicuous. There was something knightly in his bearing and tone, which carried him through transactions other than chivalrous without forfeiting his title to that favourite epithet. The present Lord Derby represents the transition of the English aristocracy into a plutocracy, or rather its merging into the plutocracy which has grown up around

it, and added immensely to its wealth. The looms of Manchester and the docks of Liverpool which have doubled the rent-roll of Knowsley, seem to have had some moral influence on its present lord. There is a nameless air of the counting-house and of the City about him. It is no doubt these qualities which have attracted to him the confidence of such men as Mr. Samuel Laing. His Toryism is *bourgeois*, as unlike that of Mr. Disraeli as can possibly be. Indeed, the friendship of these two eminent men is a singular instance that dissimilar characters are reciprocally more attractive than those which resemble each other. Mr. Disraeli's dedication of the expurgated "Revolutionary Epick" to Lord Derby is a curious monument of a curious friendship. As cold natures seek the fire, so level and sober characters seem to find a charm in the escapades and caprices of more impulsive and whimsical tempers.

Lord Derby has described himself as but little

of a party politician. He is understood to have been ready, so far as his own personal feelings were concerned, to accept office in Lord Palmerston's administration; and he has held three Secretaryships of State in the successive Governments of his father and of Mr. Disraeli. Probably no one was ever freer from personal or class prejudices than he. At Cambridge, and afterwards in the House of Commons, Lord Derby sought always the society less of the men of his own set than of the men of any set from whom he could learn something. He was intimate, and maintained his intimacy, with the best minds of his University; and in Parliament nobody of his political rank talked so freely and indiscriminately with men of every variety of social and political belonging. This conscientious desire to inform himself on all sides of opinion, and to look at a question through everybody's eyes in order to help his own vision, need only a more vivid imagination and a quicker sympathy, to produce

143030

more considerable results than have followed from it. All that he could assimilate he has taken up; all that he could see he has fairly allowed to count for what it was worth in the formation of his opinions. But he seems to lack faculty for the higher constructive statesmanship. The materials are there, but there is no master-builder. The altar and sacrifice are ready, but the flame does not descend. Lord Derby has little comprehension either of political speculation of the larger order, or of political feeling of the deeper kind. The former he regards as visionary notions; the latter as sentimental weakness. This constitutes him a "safe" man in the eyes of many—that is to say, he is a safe statesman when no danger threatens. In times when original conceptions and the power imaginatively to realise and embody popular feelings are needed, he would be one of the most dangerous of guides. There is no adviser so perilous as one who applies ordinary rules to extraordinary occa-

sions; and this is Lord Derby's habitual attitude in politics. His criticism upon the Irish measures of the present Government brings out this defect very clearly; and his harsh censure, when Secretary for India, of Lord Canning's Oude proclamation, was another illustration of the same inability to appreciate the demands of a situation which lies outside ordinary rules and necessities.

Lord Derby is frequently spoken of as the destined First Minister of England when the time shall come for the withdrawal of the present leaders from office and public life. He would not, however, be the natural chief of a party of action, because he has no impulses to push him forward; nor of a party of reaction, for he has no prejudices to drive him backward. He might with more propriety be the head of a stationary party in a period of stagnation. But this Third or Neutral party, so often invoked, is an impossibility; for it would be crushed, as between the

upper and nether millstones, by the other two parties. It is not a necessity; for either of the two parties is ready to supply the void when a Laodicean policy is wanted. It is curious to observe, and it would be uncandid to conceal the fact, that, with the exception of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, the most ardent Radicals, and the most forward of Advanced Reformers, had no scruple in serving under the Administration, which the Tories assert to have been Conservative in disguise, of Lord Palmerston. A Third Party is not necessary, therefore, to a neutral policy of rest and thankfulness; nor is it necessary to Lord Derby's future Premiership. His very indifference to party makes him good-naturedly tolerant of its exigencies, and ready to adapt himself to them with a facility which has not improved his reputation. The line which he took in the Reform Bill intrigues of 1866 and 1867, and on the Irish Church question in 1868, proves that a man need not be a strong partisan in order

to discharge successfully the work of factious manœuvre. It may be questioned, however, whether Lord Derby has the attractive and commanding personal qualities necessary in a Parliamentary leader; and his conspicuous want of readiness and resource in debate is almost an insuperable obstacle to his holding such a position in a nation governed as Mr. Carlyle says England is by talk. He is better fitted to be a perpetual President of a Social Science Association, or the Chairman in reserve of any and every Commission of Inquiry which any Government may choose to appoint. If he had not been the Earl of Derby, he would have been admirably placed as the chief permanent official in some of the great departments of State. He would keep a complicated mechanism in excellent working trim, would readjust it when it got slightly out of gear, and would be a check against the bold innovations of a too eager or impetuous chief. His administration of the different offices he has

held has been of this orderly, respectable, and unexciting character. His foreign policy was sensible and tame. He tried arbitration with America, but the effort broke down in the Senate at Washington. He framed a Luxemburg Treaty, which tied only a slip knot. He is scarcely one of those statesmen of whom it is possible to expect greater things than he has yet accomplished. There is no sign of undeveloped qualities in his mind. At five-and-twenty he was what he is now. A balanced mind and character in a young man are generally the signs of narrow limits; for growth is usually successive in the several parts of mind as of body—first this limb or faculty, then that—and is marked by disproportion and a certain ungainliness until the full stature and the final proportion are reached. There is nothing of this sort in Lord Derby. All was balanced from the first, and there is no promise of anything very great at the last. He has ordinary gifts in an extraordinary degree. In a more

complimentary sense than that in which Mr. Disraeli applies the phrase to a much inferior man, he may be called the Arch-Mediocrity of English politics.

VII.

MR. CARDWELL.

WE have always had a good deal of sympathy with the unfortunate witness on Thurtell's trial, who was suddenly called on to say what he meant by the word "respectable." Mr. Carlyle has embalmed his effort, and the question and answer in which it culminated, in one of his essays:—"*Q.* What sort of a person was Mr. Weare? *A.* He was a very respectable person. *Q.* What do you mean by respectable? *A.* He kept a gig." Probably, if the witness had been informed that the gig was not the essence of Mr. Weare's respectability, nor even an inseparable property of it, but only a separable accident, he

might have contended for it as a permanent property, and denied that there had been any accident, if he did not more wisely decline altogether to enter into the metaphysics of the subject. It is easy enough to understand his mistake. Hastily casting about on a rather sudden summons for the feature which had most impressed him in the late Mr. Weare's life and career, and which would convey to others, most rapidly and convincingly, the estimate which he himself had formed, his imagination fixed upon the crowning circumstance of the possession of a gig. The reply has afforded Mr. Carlyle the opportunity of being sarcastic at frequent intervals during nearly half a century upon gigmen and gigmanity; but in these sportive effusions our great humourist and moralist is not quite consistent with himself. The gig was to the witness's mind a symbol of the superiority of its possessor over the great majority of mankind who are obliged to go on foot, or to be indebted to the charity of others for a lift. It

was realised property, and testified to the shrewdness and thrift which Mr. Carlyle eulogises as the key to national greatness and individual prosperity. It represented also, with the horse attached—and though the horse is not in evidence we may assume him—a facility of locomotion which is one of the first conditions of modern enterprise. Probably a witness in our own day, if asked what he meant by a respectable man, would reply somewhat differently. He might say that Mr. Cardwell is a respectable man. He is indeed the respectable man of contemporary politics; and if epithets were attached now to the names of Statesmen, as formerly they used to be to the names of Kings, he would go down through history to posterity with that adjective affixed to his name. In the fashion of old dedications and title-pages, which deal largely in voluntary phrases of praise, such as "the most puissant," and "the thrice illustrious," he might be designated as the Right Honourable and Very Re-

spectable Edward Cardwell. His crest and motto, if there were any fitness in things, ought to present a man driving a gig with the legend *Decorum est.* It is not in evidence, and it would be gratuitous to assume, that Mr. Cardwell himself keeps a gig; but it is morally certain, if there be any truth in Mr. Darwin's theory of the formation and transmission of physical and moral qualities, that his ancestors, through long generations, must have done so. Mr. Cardwell's bearing is that of a man cautiously, and perhaps even a little timidly, driving the most respectable of vehicles, with figure well held and squared, and with elbows neatly brought in, so as to economise space, and yet leave free play with the hands for the gentle stimulus of the whip and the judicious restraint of the reins.

It will perhaps be objected that to describe Mr. Cardwell as respectable and then to define respectability by reference to Mr. Cardwell is a circular process, something like one of the first efforts of

the unfortunate victim of a Socratic cross-examination in a Platonic Dialogue, to the opening sentences of which the fragment of conversation quoted from Thurtell's trial bears a certain resemblance. The various species of statesmen, however, is a subject which belongs rather to natural history than to science; and according to Dr. Whewell natural groups of objects are better indicated by type than by definition, and Mr. Cardwell is the perfect type of the order of respectable politicians. Respectability does not express a distinct quality in a character so much as the impression made by a character or a group of qualities on the mind of an observer; and this impression, distinct but indefinable, Mr. Cardwell makes in a more perfect manner than any of his contemporaries. The feeling which he excites does not amount to awe or to enthusiastic admiration, but keeps the level of a sober and chastened regard. It is the sentiment raised in relatives by very steady young men. Mr.

Cardwell is the steady young man of public life. He probably never had a loose political thought nor an ill-regulated political passion. His ideas are all neatly arranged in their proper order, and are never wanting when they are called for; and though it may be said that their number is not so great as to make the task of arrangement difficult, it is obvious that even a few ideas of no considerable magnitude may be too much for limited mental accommodation. The dimensions of the room to be occupied have to be taken into account just as much as the number and size of the things to be put into it. Mr. Cardwell's acquisitions and opinions are neatly stored away where they are accessible at a moment's notice; and his skill in disposing them is not to be questioned because of their quality or paucity. His demeanour is the very triumph of respectability. There is a prim grace and almost a demure coquetry about it, which in the other sex would seem appropriate to a pretty Quaker. The

Greek epithets of praise, "fair and good," apply to him, and Mr. Cardwell satisfies the æsthetic feelings as well as the moral judgments of observers. His oratory is of the same kind. Its characteristic is, perhaps, best expressed by the word nice; and, when not unduly protracted, it is said that, despite the lugubriousness of tone which it has in common with the oratory of the other pupils of Sir Robert Peel, it always produces a most favourable impression on the Ladies' Gallery. The sentences are perfectly turned, as if by a turning lathe, and there is occasionally a smart little repartee, which comes forth as if a spring had been touched, with now and then a pale glimmer of something like a fancy which vanishes before you can distinctly apprehend it, but leads you to the conclusion that the mechanism is more complicated and skilful than you had supposed. Mr. Cardwell has a delicate sense of the conventional fitness of things which has made him equally acceptable to the Court and to the

House of Commons, to the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief and to the Radicals below the gangway. He is the Valentine of the Treasury Bench, as Mr. Forster is its Orson. The respectable qualities which we have recited have stood Mr. Cardwell in good stead. His gradual but secure advance illustrates anew the fable of the tortoise and the hare. He has plodded steadily on, never making any very rapid running, but never going to sleep upon the road, nor losing himself by attempting any short cut. Of his political career it may be said, as Coleridge says in one of his allegories:—

> "O'er rough and smooth with even step he passed,
> And knows not whether he be first or last."

The result is that at length he finds himself among the first.

Mr. Cardwell's Parliamentary and official life, from his appointment, more than a quarter of a century ago, as Secretary of the Treasury in the Administration of Sir Robert Peel, until the

present moment, when, as everybody knows, he occupies one of the highest posts in the Cabinet of Mr. Gladstone, has been spent in the closest association with the other surviving colleagues and followers of Sir Robert Peel. He shared the benevolent neutrality which they observed towards the first Administration of Lord Russell, went with them into the Coalition Government of Lord Aberdeen, which he and they quitted on Mr. Roebuck's motion and Lord John Russell's desertion, to remain in opposition until the second Administration of Lord Palmerston, when they definitively cast in their lot with the Liberal party. In 1854, Mr. Cardwell's fidelity to his friends was proof against Lord Palmerston's attempt to detach him from them by the offer of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, a tempting bait to a statesman not up to that time admitted to the Cabinet, the acceptance of which would have given him a political rank for which he had to wait nine or ten years longer, as the holder of

one of the great offices of State. Mr. Cardwell has been in succession Secretary of the Treasury, President of the Board of Trade, Secretary for Ireland, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Secretary of State for War. With a single exception he has filled all these posts with a very creditable degree of skill and a very fair amount of success. He can administer a Department, whether he has to deal with calicoes and sugars in Whitehall-gardens, with colonists in Downing-street, or with soldiers in Pall-mall, just as he might work a sum in arithmetic without considering whether the figures stood for peers or paupers, for ships or shillings. Where this mechanical routine ceases Mr. Cardwell has broken down. He was probably the worst Irish Secretary appointed since the Reform Act of 1832; and the post has been filled by the present Sir Robert Peel and by Mr. Horsman. So long as he can guide himself by fixed rules, and bring everything to the test of

pre-established usage or the terms of an Act of Parliament, he is safe; but when these fail him he loses his way and his head. His chart and compass are gone. To him the regulations of a Department, and Parliamentary and Administrative precedents, are laws of the Universe unoriginated and irreversible. An American humourist represents the world as revolving on its axis in obedience to the Constitution of the United States; and Mr. Cardwell appears to take something of the same view of the subjection of all things to the rules of a Department. In Ireland, the shifting condition of affairs and the growing and conflicting demands of rival factions, made the precedents of the past inapplicable. For the successful government of that country a quick appreciation of a new situation, and prompt and firm action upon that perception, are essential. Mr. Cardwell showed himself singularly lacking in this faculty. He did little more than feebly trim between rival factions, making small con-

cessions now to this side, now to that, which irritated one party by what they gave, and the other by what they withheld, and left affairs more embarrassed and feelings more exasperated than before. The reform of the Land Laws which he attempted passed into an Act of Parliament, but never passed into operation. The apparatus provided for working it was so elaborate as to be itself unworkable. It produced simply a deadlock. It was so tied up with conditions and regulations that it was impossible to set it going. Mr. Cardwell in Ireland was like a very good and decorous boy set to be monitor in a school of noisy and turbulent fellows; and he was simply laughed at as a great girl, and earned the disparaging nickname of Miss Cardwell. He is indeed the good boy of modern politics; and it is this character which has insured his gradual but steady rise to, perhaps, the second position on the Ministerial bench in the House of Commons. He has caused no trouble to his superiors. As school-

masters say, he is a credit to the establishment, and has never given the slightest ground of complaint. Mr. Gladstone, no doubt, wishes that all the rest were like him, and very especially that Mr. Ayrton and Mr. Lowe, who are never out of one scrape but they are in another, would take example by him. Mr. Cardwell has never, so far as we recollect, been the subject of a Ministerial explanation, or given occasion to a Ministerial apology. This is a great thing. A colleague who introduces an element of repose and confidence into the life of a harassed Prime Minister is an invaluable possession, not so much for what he does as for what he does not do. Mr. Cardwell may be safely reckoned upon not to indulge in any sudden escapade or to develop any moral friskiness.

During the past two years he has exhibited higher qualities than he had previously shown. His conduct of the Military reforms of the past and the previous Session showed a singular power

of mastering the details of a complicated scheme, and great readiness in defending and explaining it with promptitude and point, if with no great versatility of resource or flexibility of temper. Supplied with principles, and urged on by the impulse of a powerful leader and a united party, he can put a measure through, against unflagging opposition to its aim and to its minutest details, with a patient persistence which in the end overcomes all obstacles. Mr. Cardwell's prudence and discretion, his self-command, his habitual abstinence from anything that can wound or irritate opponents, his minute knowledge of the forms of the House of Commons, his experience of public business in various departments, and his reputation as a safe and well-informed financier, have turned conjecture towards him as, in certain circumstances, a possible leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. His age is, however, so nearly that of Mr. Gladstone, that these speculations are worth very little. If any

unfortunate accident should make the question a practical one, the Liberal party might feel that though Mr. Cardwell's leadership might not be marked by bold and vigorous initiative in legislation, or by animation in Parliamentary combat, it would be free from the capricious petulance which seems inseparable from one of his conspicuous colleagues, who has been sometimes thought of as aspiring to the first place in the House of Commons; and that a high and refined sense of political honour would prevent him from combining with opponents to defeat his friends, or from sacrificing the substance of a measure in order to pass the mere shell and framework of it. But it would still be doubtful whether the best of chief clerks could become a real ruler of men.

VIII.

LORD RUSSELL.

IN a recent speech, Lord Russell referred to himself as one of the ancestors of the present generation. The commonplace which describes him as the Nestor of politicians is more accurate than such easy parallels usually are. Two generations of articulately-speaking men who were reared with him in heaven-protected Pylos have faded away, and in the House of Lords he holds sway over a third, not always, perhaps, so articulately speaking. His reminiscences of Grey and Althorp, of Holland and Mackintosh, and the elder chiefs of his party, have sometimes a little about them of a Nestor's magnifying retrospect

of their prowess. He might claim, however, to be known by his comrades, and to be esteemed by the place they assigned him in their counsels and combats, if his own services did not make such an indirect method of judgment superfluous:—

"In times past
I lived with men, and they despised me not,
Abler in counsel, greater than yourselves.
Such men I never saw, and ne'er shall see,
As Pirithous, and Dryas, wise and brave,
Cœneus, Exadius, godlike Polypheme,
And Theseus, Ægeus' more than mortal son.
With them I played my part. . . . . .
And they my counsels heard, my voice obeyed."

Nothing, however, can be further from Lord Russell's habitual language in speaking of himself than this garrulous self-laudation. In nearly the concluding words of the autobiographical introduction which he has prefixed to the two volumes of Speeches and Despatches, he remarks:—

"To speak of my own work, I can only rejoice that I have been allowed to have my share in the task accomplished in the half-century

which has passed from 1819 to 1869. My capacity, I always felt, was very inferior to that of the men who have attained in past times the foremost place in our Parliament, and in the councils of our Sovereign. I have committed many errors, some of them very gross blunders. But the generous people of England are always forbearing and forgiving to those statesmen who have the good of their country at heart: like my betters, I have been misrepresented and slandered by those who knew nothing of me; but I have been more than compensated by the confidence and friendship of the best men of my own political connection, and by the regard and favourable interpretation of my motives which I have heard expressed by my generous opponents, from the days of Lord Castlereagh to those of Mr. Disraeli."

The frank simplicity of this declaration is very characteristic of its author. There is a nakedness of confession about it which does not usually ac-

company apologies, which are generally designed to show the reader that where the penitent was most wrong he was in reality most right, and seem intended to suggest to the candour of his critics a reversal of the judgment which in words he passes upon himself. This habit of mind explains pleasantly some of the superficially least pleasing features of Lord Russell's career. There has always been a sort of innocent nudity about him. He never dresses himself up or disguises his motives. Whenever he has intrigued—and nearly every statesman, probably, does intrigue more or less against his rivals of the opposite party or of his own—he has done so in the most transparent manner. When he has wanted an office filled by any one else in a Government of which he was a member, he has said so and taken it. His dismissal of Lord Palmerston, his retirement from the Aberdeen Administration, the part he played in the negotiations at Vienna, and his manœuvres against the Ministries of Lord Palmerston and

Lord Derby, were of the most ingenuous character. He has plotted as openly as the conspirators in Canning's mock-play of *The Rovers*. If he had been engaged in the Gunpowder Treason, he would have walked down to the Houses of Parliament at mid-day with the matches in his hand and the barrel of gunpowder under his arm. When his friends have been in office, and he has for any reason been out of it, he has spoken his mind of them as freely, and with as little regard to the policy of seeming to play the part of a generous patron or an indulgent apologist, as if he and they had sat upon opposite benches during the whole of their political lives. Lord Russell is not a reconciler. It cannot be said of him, in whatever other respects he may resemble the Greek hero:—

"Nestor componere lites
Inter Peleiden festinat, et inter Atreidem."

He has systematically neglected the arts of popularity and the ordinary methods of cementing

party attachment. He is as little able as Coriolanus himself to stand in the market-place and make merchandise of his wounds, and solicit the most sweet voices of the mob. He has met enthusiasm by a rebuff. He sometimes displays a certain ungraciousness of disposition, and a lack of those genial and sympathetic qualities which win liking, and help to make life more agreeable than it would otherwise be. Lord Russell's character is like the naked rock which is not made fair to the eye or soft to the tread by any overgrowth of moss or verdure. It would be pleasanter if it were so relieved. But it is better to have the naked rock than the treacherous morass, hidden beneath the grass and flowers which tempt and betray the footsteps. A future generation will estimate Lord Russell's character less by its superficial graces, or its lack of them, than by more fundamental qualities. The degree in which he accommodated himself to his party and colleagues, or made himself pleasant to his

contemporaries, or agreeable in society, will count for less than the long roll of services rendered, and of great principles defended and advanced. The very bleakness and bareness of his character bring out in clearer vision its solid basis and finer outlines.

At one time, early in his career, Lord Russell appears to have been half-minded to abandon politics for literature. The only fruit, however, of this dim intention was the poetic remonstrance which it called forth from Moore; and it had probably no deeper root in his character than the habit of men to idealise the pursuits which they do not follow, or follow only as a diversion, and to find disappointment and irritation in those which are the business of their lives. It is the old story of Horace's first Satire. The soldier would be a merchant, the farmer would be a lawyer. Whatever Lord Russell may have proposed, his tutelary genius disposed of him more wisely. As a writer, he might have earned a

section in some appendix to Horace Walpole's "Royal and Noble Authors;" but he would have been simply a dried plant in a *hortus siccus*, and not a living growth in a true garden. Lord Russell's taste for literature has not contributed anything of much value to it; but it has enlarged, enriched, and illustrated his statesmanship; and it has tinctured his oratory. The ablest and most cultivated, if he be not the wisest, of living American politicians is in the habit of saying that Lord Russell's speeches, whatever they may be as they are delivered, are, as they are printed, the finest specimens of contemporary English eloquence. The opinion needs qualification; but it is true that they have a clearness of phrase, and a sharp precision of thought which are not usual in spoken language; and there is a certain infusion of history and literature in them which gives them a scholarly charm. When Lord Russell has a great thing to say, he can say it greatly. The very bareness and simplicity of his mind allow

a grand conception or purpose to appear in its naked outlines. When he is animated by a high feeling, it finds expression with a certain ingenuousness and purity that set it off better than any elaborate adornment or overwrought sentimentality. A cultivated historic sense, a recollection of the stock whence he comes, and of the nation which it has served, have enabled him on more than one occasion to stand nobly for England, confronting hostile powers or denouncing an unworthy policy. He has seemed for the moment to be the incarnation of British pluck and spirit. A fanciful writer has indulged in the idea that, though overgrown by the later stages of youth, manhood, and old age, the innocence of childhood mysteriously remains with every human being; and that, in a future world, the immortalised spirit will be the immortalised child and youth and man wonderfully bound together; that all the stages of this earthly existence, and not simply its final stage, will be restored or preserved. In some-

thing of this fashion Lord Russell seems, in his better moments, to incarnate and personify in himself the history and traditions of his House and order; he is not a scion of his stock, or a member of his class only, but the embodiment of it. Mr. Disraeli never made a greater mistake than when he said that while Liberalism was in its essence cosmopolitan, Conservatism was national. The historic Liberalism of which Lord Russell is a type is intensely national. It curiously blends aristocratic sentiment with democratic conviction. He believes in privilege, with an open path by which worthiness may ascend to it, and no fence to save unworthiness from falling from it. If there is anything unwisely cosmopolitan in the present sentiments of his party, it is due to that section of it which is an offshoot from Conservatism. The Peelites brought it with them from their old political quarters and associates, and it has been somewhat strengthened by their alliance with the Manchester School.

But the Peelites and the Manchester School do not together make up the Liberal party; and the cosmopolitanism which Mr. Disraeli attributes to it is as signally exemplified by such Conservative statesmen as Lord Derby and Sir Stafford Northcote, as by any of their rivals. The historic studies and the national spirit of Lord Russell have prevented his politics from sinking to the parochial level, as well as from losing themselves in mere cosmopolitan generalities. Even his policy as Foreign Minister, mistaken and irritating as it often was, had stamped upon it a salutary sense of the greatness, and a keen jealousy of the honour, of England.

In what has preceded, Lord Russell has been described at his best; but he has often through his career been much below his best, and the least admirable parts of his character have occasionally been too prominent. When he is not inspired by a great occasion his oratory dwindles, and the poverty of the thought, undisguised beneath im-

posing phrases, reflects itself in poor and threadbare language. He then flounders into platitudes and commonplaces. In the speeches of no living statesman would it be possible to find so many great and simple truths grandly because simply expressed, and so many paltry commonplaces, naked, halting, and maimed. Lord Russell, though he has wanted the physical requisites and the temperament of an orator, though he has a dry and hesitating manner, a heavy but not powerful voice, a drawling tone, and the obsolete pronunciation of good society in the days of the Regency, has always been one of the readiest and most efficient of debaters, possessing that faculty of keen and direct retort which is like skilful sword-play. He would probably have been a greater statesman, as he would certainly have been a greater speaker, if he had possessed a more vigorous constitution, and what is often a consequence of it, higher animal spirits. Ordinarily there is a chilling coldness or lassitude about

him; and it is only when "the steam is on," that "languid Johnny soars to glorious John," and shows himself to be of "Tydeus' kind, whose little body lodged a mighty mind." During his younger days, he and Francis Horner were set down as the two almost hopeless invalids of the party; and Lord Russell's prospects of distinction and ultimate leadership were generally dismissed with the reflection that neither his health nor life could be counted on. Feeble health has tracked him through the sixty years of his public career; and its dangers have only been carefully fought off through a long struggle for existence. This physical infirmity has, no doubt, had its political consequences. Lord Russell's restless activity has been somewhat dreary; and there has been, moreover, a lack of continuity about it. It has been capricious and fitful. His sudden and unexpected movements, which have often disconcerted his friends quite as much as his enemies, have had their origin possibly in this want of staying power

quite as much as in any disposition to intrigue. He has sketched half-a-dozen plans for the benefit of Ireland, though not with the skill he showed in one day writing out, upon a half-sheet of note-paper, the scheme of the first Reform Bill which formed the basis of Lord Grey's great measure. His literary efforts have been of the same sort. He has dashed off an "Essay on the English Constitution," or "Memoirs on the Affairs of Europe since the Peace of Utrecht," or the "Adventures of a Gentleman who has left his Lodgings," or the tragedy of *Don Carlos*, with a facility which was not merely that of eager youth; for it has its counterpart in the volume, promised for this season, "On the Rise and Progress of the Christian Religion in the West of Europe," and in the new scheme which he has foreshadowed for preserving the integrity of the Empire by the disintegration of Ireland into four provinces. Lord Russell was pledged to "write next winter," not, like Pope, "more Essays on Man," but new

essays on Christianity, or more letters to "my dear Fortescue," or to my probably not less dear Hartington. Lord Russell's literary efforts are valuable chiefly as illustrating his qualities as a statesman. They show that he has acquired the various knowledge, and has the intellectual tastes and aptitudes, which become his position; and they are here and there enriched by sagacious reflections and happy aphorisms. But it might, perhaps, have been as well for his reputation if the studies out of which they have sprung had informed his political career, instead of entering a separate appearance. Depth of research, maturity of thought, and continuity of mental effort, are scarcely to be looked for in works which are mere episodes and incidents of a busy career. Can any one suppose that Lord Russell has anything to say which will make his "Essays on the Rise and Progress of Christianity in the West" of much use to the English reader who possesses Dean Milman's "History of Latin Christianity"?

Germs of thought which in their development might come to something, first sketches and outlines of ideas which if filled up might be found to have value, are sure to be scattered in their crude beginning over the promised work. The subject is one for statesmen to study, but scarcely for a statesman to write upon, unless he be also a scholar and a theologian. But Lord Russell's moral fearlessness is well known; and it is as conspicuously displayed in undertaking the History of Western Christianity, from the reign of Tiberius to the Council of Trent, as it would have been if he had volunteered for the naval and surgical services which Sydney Smith's joke declared him capable of undertaking.

In his literary efforts, which have been incessant from boyhood to advanced old age, Lord Russell has shown a taste or an ambition rather than a capacity; or, at any rate, the taste and the ambition have missed the leisure which could develop them into capacity. In statesmanship it has

been otherwise. To write the history of his achievements would be to write a large portion of the history of the past half-century. No doubt much has been owing to opportunity; but Lord Russell did not simply use the opportunities which came to him, itself not always an easy task; he made them. The beneficial legislation of the past forty years has sprung from the Reform Act of 1832; and to that measure Lord Russell in his own solitary person stood related much as Mr. Cobden, Mr. Villiers, and Sir Robert Peel were collectively related to the Repeal of the Corn Laws, or as Mr. Bright, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Disraeli to the Reform Bill of 1867. He was the agitator as well as the legislator; the pioneer not less than the cultivator. As the present Prime Minister has said, not less truly than generously, if orders were given for civil as for military services, Lord Russell's breast would be studded with stars, and crosses, and ribands. Great qualities and small ones, generosity and an occasional

paltriness, patriotism and self-seeking, seem strangely blended in Lord Russell's nature. But the nobler features are the essence of his character, and will survive in the public recollection. The infirmities with which they were associated have not been able in any vital degree to mar the worth of historic services, and will not more than temporarily obscure the grateful recognition of them.

IX.

LORD GRANVILLE.

OF all the members of Mr. Gladstone's Government, Lord Granville is probably the one who during the past few years has risen most rapidly and steadily in public opinion. Not very long ago it was customary to regard him as a statesman who illustrated little more than the charm of good manners in politics. He was thought to be a Minister of deportment, whose chief business it was to yield gracefully to irresistible majorities in the Lords, or to smooth a way for such small reforms as were offered to that assembly by the semi-Liberal Administrations which preceded Mr. Gladstone's. He was

spoken of as a courtier politician, a statesman of the *salon*, versed at best in the small diplomacy of politics. This prejudice is of old standing and was, perhaps, confirmed by the fact that it was from the Royal Household that Lord Granville entered upon the career in which he has since achieved all but the highest place, with probably the succession to the highest place, in the Liberal party. For the first two years of Lord John Russell's first Administration he held the office of Master of the Buckhounds. He had been Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs for a few months before the break-up of the Melbourne Government, having previously served an apprenticeship to diplomacy as attaché in Paris during his father's embassy there; and had sat for ten years in the House of Commons before his succession to the peerage in 1846. But his political career really began with his transfer, by Lord John Russell, in 1848, from the charge of her Majesty's Buckhounds to the

Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade. Great was the clamour which this appointment raised below the gangway. "Is thy servant a dog?" said Manchester, indignant at being handed over to the Master of the Buckhounds. Mr. Bright, we believe, made himself the mouthpiece of its anger in the House of Commons, and spoke his mind with that frank disregard of persons which has always characterized him. The appointment was denounced as a piece of nepotism on Lord John Russell's part. Very much to his credit, Mr. Bright not long afterwards admitted that Lord Granville's conduct at the Board of Trade had justified Lord John Russell's selection, and had not justified his own assault. Lord John Russell, with pardonable perversity, was more deeply aggrieved by the retractation than by the original charge. The word nepotism, naturally odious to a Russell, rankled in his mind; and he ridiculed the idea that family affection for a descendant of his grandmother could influence

his political appointments. Lord Russell's grandmother does, indeed, carry the mind back to a period of history apparently too remote to affect Ministerial combinations. For a time, however, the unfilial allusion of her grandson, and his ostentatious indifference to her posterity outside the House of Bedford, gave the old lady an historical resurrection; and Lord Russell's grandmother, as the Mother Eve of an entire Whig Cabinet, became a subject of genealogical interest. It was on this or on some similar occasion that Mr. Bernal Osborne accounted, on physiological principles, for the ricketiness of their legislative offspring, on the ground that all the members of the Government were nearly related to each other.

The expulsion of Lord Palmerston from the Foreign Office at the close of 1851 elevated Lord Granville for a few months to the post which he now fills. Henceforward, and until the formation of Mr. Gladstone's Administration,

the vicissitudes of his official career may in great part be traced to the uneasy relations of the two veteran statesmen who, having each driven the other from office, found it difficult to adjust their relations satisfactorily in the same Cabinet. The claims of elder politicians, and the necessity of assigning some of the most important offices of State to members of the House of Commons, had confined Lord Granville to titular and ornamental posts in the successive Administrations of Lord Aberdeen, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Russell. With the exception of the few months, during which he held the office of Foreign Secretary in the declining days of Lord John Russell's Government, the changes of his official career had consisted in his going from the Presidency of the Council to the Duchy of Lancaster, and from the Duchy of Lancaster to the Presidency of the Council, as Lord John Russell's political exigencies seemed to require. With a full recollection of the many high quali-

ties and the great services of that veteran statesman, one must admit that, out of office, he somewhat resembles a hermit crab without a shell, and has seldom been scrupulous in dispossessing younger colleagues who have found a retreat that he covets. The manner in which Lord Granville accommodated himself to the caprices of his old chief showed not only good-nature and self-denial, but a confidence which, in its readiness to wait, was itself a sign of power. Once, indeed, greatness seemed likely to be prematurely thrust upon him. In 1859, Lord Granville had a narrow escape of himself becoming Premier. On the retirement of Lord Derby, the Queen had to choose between Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell; and she seems to have thought that Lord Granville lay between them. It was supposed that as the Duke of Portland was the mean between Mr. Fox and Lord North, so the claims of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston might find

their adjustment in Lord Granville. The overture happily failed, through the refusal of Lord John Russell to acquiesce in this arrangement. Lord Granville is to be congratulated on the break-down of the attempted compromise. To preside over the jealousies and disputes of two rivals, animated by all the bitterness of an old quarrel and the sharper acerbity of a new reconciliation, would not have been a very comfortable task while it lasted; and to be a merely titular Premier, chosen to the first place because he was then only of the second rank in politics, is not a position which any one respecting himself would care to occupy in administration or in history.

Since the accession of Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues to office, Lord Granville has exhibited qualities of statesmanship and party management which a good many people did not suspect, and which even well-placed observers and shrewd judges of character could do little more than

suspect. The Leadership of the House of Lords, previous to Mr. Gladstone's Administration, did not really require any considerable faculty. No measures were sent from the Lower to the Upper Chamber which seriously exercised the patience of the Peers. The time was one of truce in domestic politics; organic changes and great administrative reforms were not thought of; and collision, or even marked difference of opinion between the two Houses, was of rare occurrence. Since Mr. Gladstone took office, however, all that has been changed. First as Colonial, and afterwards as Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville has had opportunities of displaying that talent for business of which he gave promise at the Board of Trade, and which he showed conspicuously as Chairman of the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1862. He has the faculty, which some great statesmen have lacked, of prompt and decisive action, and of recognising the point at which further inquiry, however speculatively

interesting or desirable for the sake of theoretic completeness, has really no bearing upon practice, except to delay what should be done at once. The tenure of the two great offices of State which he has occupied in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet has marked an era both in our colonial and in our foreign policy; and the importance of his administration may be measured by the outcry which has been raised against it. The past few years have been a period of transition. They have brought with them the delicate and difficult task of committing in larger and larger proportion to our colonies the essential work of self-maintenance and self-defence, as the conditions of self-government, without loosening the moral and political ties which unite them to the Mother Country in one common allegiance. So far from Lord Granville having pursued a policy of separation he has, on the contrary, laid the foundations of that readjustment which is the condition of the integrity of the Empire. A bond is not always the

weaker for being loose, and allowing freedom of motion. When it is tightened, it is the more likely to strain and snap. With regard to his foreign policy, it would be strange, if anything could be strange in political partisanship, to find it attacked by those who were foremost in denouncing what they used to call the swagger and braggadocio of Lord Palmerston, and the meddling and muddling of Lord Russell. Lord Granville unmeddles and unmuddles. Under him we are no longer startled by what Mr. Carlyle, describing Lord Palmerston's foreign policy, called the sudden appearance of Great Britain in the character of Hercules-Harlequin, waving her huge sword of sharpness over field-mice, to see how they will like it. Lord Granville declines to act the part of "Hercules-Harlequin, the Attorney-Triumphant, the World's Busybody," and we hear outcries about the decline of British influence and the humiliation of the British name. The fact is that to conduct a retreat from positions which

ought never to have been taken up is not in itself a very splendid and imposing business; but it is a very necessary one; and, on the whole, it has been well performed. The courage to withdraw from a false position must, however, be proved to be courage by the spirit and firmness with which, when occasion arises, the interests and honour of England are vindicated against whatever antagonist, and in spite of seduction or threat. To Lord Granville it has fallen to effect the transition from a policy of vicious meddling in foreign and colonial affairs to one of judicious abstention, the effect of which, so far from isolating England, is to leave her ready with undegraded authority, with unwasted resources, and with free judgment and conscience, to interpose with decision, when duty to herself and to the world may require her to do so. Instead of snapping and barking round every European fight, her voice should be like that of Sir Walter Scott's old hound Maida, of whom he said, "He

seldom opens his mouth, but when he does, he shakes the hills."

It is related of Mr. Pitt that, being asked what was the quality most essential in a Prime Minister, he replied that it was not eloquence, nor knowledge, nor toil, but patience—by which, as the context makes clear, he meant self-possession and self-control, or what we call good-temper. For the lack of this gift, the eloquence, knowledge, and toil of some eminent statesmen have been less useful than they should have been. In Pitt's case the patience which he eulogised and exhibited was an acquired faculty. Early in his career, Sheridan, stung by a sneer at his theatrical connections, had compared Pitt to Ben Jonson's "Angry Boy." The angry boy did not grow up into a passionate man. What with Pitt was a work of art appears with Lord Granville to be a gift of nature. The faculty of patience, in the sense in which the great statesman intended it, is something more than good-nature. It is an

intellectual as well as a moral quality. It makes the difference between a clear and a clouded state of the mental atmosphere; between a candidly receptive and judicial temper, and one of impulse and caprice; between a mind disposed to listen and one prone to dictate. Equanimity and equity are closely associated qualities. Lord Granville's success as Leader of the House of Lords and as a diplomatist is in great part attributable to this faculty of patience. A quick-tempered or an angry negotiator would almost certainly, during the past few years, have embroiled us with America and Russia, and probably with France and Germany too. An irritable or an impulsive leader would soon have the House of Lords in open revolt. The work of passing great measures of change through an assembly a majority of which distrusts and hates them, and of which the minority that gives them a sort of support only half likes them, is by no means easy. A knowledge of men and a tolerance of their pre-

judices, a certain art in humouring them, a faculty of coaxing, such as a kindly physician employs towards a fractious patient—in other words, "a learned spirit of human dealings," is essential in such an assembly. Mere suavity or benignity, however, would not suffice. There must be firmness beneath it, and the power of substituting firmness in manner for it. In this Lord Granville is by no means deficient. He is capable of a certain sub-acidity which declares itself beneath his most honeyed words. His diplomatic correspondence bears witness to his power of saying, on occasion, sharp and pointed things. He can disarm an opponent with an air of winning politeness, and transfix him with an appearance of almost affectionate solicitude. He can insinuate a taunt with courteous deference, and suggest to an antagonist in terms the most seductive that he is making a fool of himself. Lord Granville has been described as distilling a softening and soothing unction over political affairs; but even such anta-

gonists as Lord Salisbury and Lord Cairns have sometimes had occasion to say of this unction, in the language of the Common Prayer version of the Book of Psalms, "Let not his precious balms break my head." As a Parliamentary leader Lord Granville is to Mr. Gladstone as Milton's Allegro to Penseroso. The former is "buxom, blithe, and debonair;" the other, "devout and pure, sober, steadfast, and demure," and sometime "held in holy passion," though it cannot be said that he ever "forgets himself to marble." In special qualities and gifts, in eloquence, in scholarship, in philosophic thought, some of Lord Granville's colleagues excel him; but in proportion of mind, in statesmanlike temper, and in the union of skill in the instrumental arts of Parliamentary leadership with a sufficient mastery of the substance and essence of political work, he has, whatever that may amount to, no superior in Mr. Gladstone's Ministry.

X.

LORD SELBORNE.

SIR ROUNDELL PALMER'S elevation to the Lord Chancellorship and to the peerage was received with a murmur of applause, as from a sympathetic universe. If a good man struggling with adversity is a spectacle which the gods honour, a good man successfully climbing the ladder of prosperity is a sight which gives pleasure to men. Lord Selborne as Lord Chancellor was hailed as Astræa Redux and Virtue Triumphant. The Great Seal was for once regarded as a sort of superb Monthyon prize of virtue, which Lord Selborne had won. The tributes which were heaped upon him on all hands show

the tendency of observers to form their judgment of a man's character from some single and decisive act in his career. When Lord Selborne declined to join an Administration pledged to the disestablishment of the Irish Church—or, rather, when he took the earlier step of separating himself from his chief and his party, then in opposition, upon this question, and so made any formal offer of office impossible—he missed a great chance, the recurrence of which, though not improbable, was by no means certain. His age, as compared with that of Lord Hatherley, and his unrivalled position among equity lawyers in the House of Commons and in society, would have justified him in thinking that the advancement for which he deliberately disqualified himself in 1867 might present itself at a later time in circumstances which would make it possible for him to accept it. But this was a mere perchance. No one could anticipate the physical infirmity which has compelled Lord

Hatherley's retirement; and a Conservative reaction, which should give Lord Cairns a long tenure of the Woolsack, though extravagantly improbable, was not absolutely impossible. Lord Selborne let a prize go which he might never have an opportunity of grasping again. He committed what was a moral certainty to the chapter of accidents. The current might once more float it to his feet, or it might carry it hopelessly away. A lawyer following the practice of his profession, a politician adhering to the fortunes of his party, seldom has the opportunity of showing the disinterestedness which Lord Selborne displayed. With similar convictions, and in a parallel case, there are probably many men in both parties who would have taken a like course. Lord Salisbury and the seceders from Lord Derby's Cabinet are instances in point. The wonder is, not that persons are found who will sacrifice their political interests to their political convictions, but that in these days of flux

and change, and of legislation in obedience to external necessity rather than to mature interior faith, men are here and there discovered who have convictions stable enough to allow them to do otherwise than drift along the stream of events. Lord Selborne is fortunate in having been able to give a signal proof of disinterestedness which redeems the vulgarity and meanness of political life.

To this recognition of a high principle in public men, the welcome given to Lord Selborne may be largely attributed; for the order of his character and mind is such as to commend him rather to the esteem than to the very cordial liking of his countrymen. He is a good man, but his goodness is not of the type which they most relish. It is somewhat sanctimonious and priggish. Naturalists, we believe, are agreed that, whatever the true doctrine may be of the origin of species, there is no historic trace of the introduction of a new species in the vegetable or

animal world. Lord Selborne, however, is a type, though by no means a solitary example, of a new species in the political life of England. Formerly ecclesiastics were not rare who possessed and displayed the characteristic virtues, and often the characteristic vices, of men of the world. There were Bishops who led armies, and Cardinals who ruled States, priests who went on embassies and intrigued at Courts, and who were Churchmen in little more than costume. Albornoz and Wolsey, Richelieu and Alberoni, are names which at once present themselves. Within the last generation a phenomenon just the reverse of this has disclosed itself in English politics. A class of statesmen and lawyers has grown up who exhibit the peculiar virtues and foibles of ecclesiastics—men who seem to be laymen only in profession and in costume, but who are Churchmen at heart. The succession of Lord Selborne to Lord Hatherley upon the Woolsack carries one back to the time when ecclesiastics were our Lord Chancellors.

Although Lord Westbury has declared that he owes his success in life to a habit of Bible-reading and to the formation of his character upon the precepts of the New Testament, he does not strictly belong to this order of lawyers and politicians. There is a certain want of robustness and frankness about these Churchmen out of Holy Orders. They are demure and self-conscious. The drooping glance which seems to shun the lust of the eye, and the bowed head which denotes an oppressive sense of humility, suit the cloister and the hood rather than St. Stephen's and the barrister's wig and gown. Their very gait expresses a sort of moral gliding through the world, so as to evade the evil of it; their hands are pensile and motionless, close to their sides as if to keep their very skirts untouched and unspotted by the evil men and things about them. Their speech is a sort of mournful plaint, a melancholy sing-song, conveying, as it were, a hinted remonstrance against the hardness of heart of those to whom

they appeal, an obtrusive patience of an unwillingness to be convinced, and a sort of lifting up of a disregarded testimony. This priest-like bearing has its moral equivalent. On ethical questions which decide themselves instantaneously to a plain judgment, politicians of the type we describe are given to a refined and ingenious casuistry, which sometimes enables a conscientious statesman to do from the very loftiest motives things which a public man, less given to strict self-examination, and therefore less liable, it may be, to that elaborate self-deception which often waits on self-scrutiny, would not venture even to debate within himself. It would be improper and unfair to say that this type of character, although its defects are often but the shadows of great virtues, is perfectly realised in any living statesman. There is, however, a certain degree of approximation to it in some of our public men; and, perhaps, its foibles are those against which Lord Selborne has some

need to guard. It is a strange paradox that the man who could risk the sacrifice of a career to his convictions on the Irish Church Disestablishment question, should have been the equally disinterested apologist of the translation of Sir Robert Collier.

If we consider the ecclesiastical statesman of the type we have sketched, in his sources, he may be analyzed into a combination (to use the vulgar terms of description) of the Puseyite and the Peelite. He is a compound of the political flexibility of the one, and the moral casuistry of the other; and is usually able with little trouble to affiliate party exigencies to lofty motives which transfigure them. His Churchmanship, however, is the essence of the man; his profession of statesmanship or of law is little more than a secular avocation that does not engage his heart. Such Chancellors as Lord Hatherley, the author of "The Continuity of the Scriptures," and Lord Selborne, the compiler of the "Book of Praise,"

are attached to the Church of England, as a sort of home of their religious life and affections. Between them and such Chancellors as Lord Thurlow—who cared for nothing but the Establishment, and who is said to have told a deputation of Unitarians, whose application for civil relief he repulsed, that "if they could get their d—d thing established he would support it;" or Lord Eldon, who compared himself to a buttress which propped up the Church without ever being inside—the difference is immense.

As a statesman, Lord Selborne has yet his mark to make. Now, for the first time, he has a seat in the Cabinet, with an office which gives him immense authority and weight; and it remains to be seen what he will do with his position and opportunities. He has in ample measure ingenuity, refinement, and conscientiousness; but these are qualities which often magnify the perception of difficulties without giving the force to overcome them. It is still

an open question whether Lord Selborne has the impulse of a reforming statesman, the vigour and the robustness to push through or to crush down obstacles, and the constructive faculty which is urgently needed in that department of affairs which is specially committed to him. As a law officer of the Crown in the House of Commons, without a seat in the Cabinet, Lord Selborne could of course do little more than speak for the several Governments with which he was connected from the briefs which they gave to him. He was of necessity a political advocate rather than a politician proper: not otherwise do Attorneys and Solicitors-General hold their offices. The condition under which law and politics are combined in England commonly sacrifices politics to law, though it ends sometimes in sacrificing law to politics. The House of Commons is generally the shortest road to Westminster Hall. Rising lawyers enter Parliament as the means of advancing themselves in their profession, and

of course they are not likely to devote themselves very strenuously or very conscientiously, as for its own sake, to that which is with them but an instrument. To this fact may be attributed the habitual flexibility of lawyers as politicians, and the slight impression they usually make on public affairs in England. In the United States, on the other hand, the bar is usually the path along which ambition makes its way into the broader career of public life. The consequence is that while the class of great lawyer-statesmen seems to be almost extinct here, it has contributed, and still contributes, the best names to American politics. Whether Lord Selborne is to add to the list of disappointed public expectations, or to prove that a Lord Chancellor may be a bold reformer, and that a good lawyer may be a great statesman, remains to be seen. He has shown more political foresight than many of his present colleagues. In 1866—the irony is in the facts, and not in the statement of them—he foresaw

household suffrage, which did not become law until 1867. Eleven or twelve years ago, in detaching himself from the political party to which he had hitherto belonged, and in accepting office in a Liberal Government, he displayed a sympathy with the tendencies of the time, a perception of the course in which things were moving, and a recognition of the data of the various problems which statesmanship had to solve, keen and strong enough to overcome the prepossessions of education and association. He probably perceived that the wisest Conservatism, as well as the truest Liberalism, dictates opening safe channels to forces against which it is useless and dangerous to erect barriers. There is fair promise of a great future in Lord Selborne's past career, but no absolute pledge. He is sure to be a dignified Speaker of the House of Lords, and an invaluable help in debate to his colleagues, from his great knowledge, his pure and lofty character, and his persuasive eloquence.

XI.

LORD CAIRNS.

LORD CAIRNS occupies a rather peculiar position in the House of Lords and in the Conservative party. He is one of two retired leaders — Lord Malmesbury being the other. Both of these gentlemen found their health unequal to the anxieties of the charge committed to them; though there were no public symptoms of wavering confidence on the part of their followers. They now with a good grace cede at least a nominal priority to the Duke of Richmond. A dethroned sovereign is seldom very heartily a loyal subject. He has usually slumbering pretensions, which may at any moment

be revived; and he acquiesces rather than obeys. If it were not for the good faith and zeal of his allies, the Duke of Richmond's leadership would be about as comfortable as Henry VI.'s Monarchy, disputed by pretenders, and swayed hither and thither by turbulent barons. Not only do Lord Cairns and Lord Malmesbury warn him of the transitoriness of all human greatness, and offer a service rather of grace than of allegiance; but Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby still more vividly remind him that the etymology *dux à non ducendo* is as plausible as that of *lucus à non lucendo*. In fact, there are at least five Richmonds in the field of the House of Lords; and the actual Richmond is, with one exception, the least formidable of them all. As a debater, and in force of character and intellect, he is, perhaps, superior to Lord Malmesbury; and that, whatever it may amount to, is the most that can be said for him.

Lord Malmesbury had one qualification for

leadership in the House of Lords which his immediate successor lacked. It takes only a generation or two to acquire the true baronial feeling; and, being the third earl, of course he has very strongly the sentiment of his order. This made him the fit representative of the Plantagenets and Stanleys, to say nothing of the ennobled offspring of Lord Chancellors and Lord Mayors, to whom the consciousness of old nobility has been transferred by a sort of moral vaccination which never fails to take. Like some engrafted plants, it flourishes more vigorously on a foreign stem than on its own. But aristocratic sentiment is not enough. It needs ideas for its vehicle and interpretation; and if Lord Malmesbury has ideas, he cannot make them apparent. On Mr. Galton's doctrine of the transmission of genius there is a strong presumption of latent ability in Lord Malmesbury. It may be with him as with Hudibras, who had much wit, but was very shy of using it. Coleridge describes

the "Hermes" of Lord Malmesbury's great grandfather as uniting the precision of Aristotle with the elegance of Quintilian. It is difficult to recognise these qualities in the spoken or written style of his descendant; and just as little can the most patient and friendly observer detect in him any of the philosophical aptitudes of the noble author of the "Characteristics," from whom Lord Malmesbury no less boasts direct lineage. Is it possible that the accumulated learning of generations has had an effect on the feeble organization of a descendant akin to that brought about in the case of Mr. Toots? Do Lord Malmesbury's shapeless notions and structureless speech represent the efforts of a mind struggling beneath an embarrassing inheritance of mental wealth, derived from the philosophic conceptions of Shaftesbury, the philological learning of Harris, and the diplomatic sagacity of the first Earl of Malmesbury? This is a problem which we must leave to the professors of psycho-

logical medicine, and to the expounders of the laws which regulate, and in certain combinations appear to intercept, the transmission of genius. We have to do with the result only. If Mr. Toots could have been elevated to the peerage, he would probably, with the help of Lord Salisbury as a Parliamentary substitute for the sharp Miss Nipper, have led the House of Lords much as Lord Malmesbury succeeded for a time in doing; with the same distinctness of purpose, clearness of thought, and transparency and precision of language.

Lord Malmesbury has detained us from Lord Cairns. It is difficult to resist the interest, approaching to fascination, of the subject; but to muse upon Lord Malmesbury is not to wander far from Lord Cairns. Meditation upon the one is a help to the study of the other; and this not because the two men are alike, but because they are essentially unlike. The knowledge of opposites, philosophers tell us, is the

same. To perceive what a thing is, you must recognise what it is not. Exact apprehension is the apprehension of contrasts. Now Lord Cairns is, in most respects, the precise opposite of Lord Malmesbury. He is a man of keen and sharp intellect, of quick perceptions, and of definite convictions. His language is clear and precise, and even grammatical—the last a peculiarity which distinguishes him from almost all the Parliamentary orators of his day. But he has one fatal defect. To use a phrase of the actors, he is without the sentiment of his part. He does not look the leader of one of the great aristocratic parties—of the great aristocratic party—of England; and he has always apparently been conscious of this. In the tones of his voice, in manner, bearing, dress even, Lord Cairns always seems slightly out of place between Lord Salisbury and the Duke of Richmond. He is something more or something less than merely lawyer-like. His get-up is

rather that of a fashionable, well-bred stockbroker—a chastened and mitigated stockbroker if you like—considerably subdued by good taste from the glossy splendour and the latest style of 'Change, a little less like a walking extract from the book of fashions; but still to the critical eye, and yet more to the speculative mind, which has imbibed the Clothes Philosophy of "Sartor Resartus," distinctly recalling traces of character. Mr. Carlyle, speaking through Professor Teufelsdröckh, lays down the doctrine that in tailoring, as little as in legislating, is anything a matter of accident—less so, we should say. "If the cut betokens intellect and talent, so does the colour betoken temper and heart;" and his image of a naked duke addressing a naked House of Lords shows forcibly to the bewildered mind how much the conception of character is due to costume. We will not undertake to determine in detail Lord Cairns's intellect and talent from the cut of his clothes,

or his temper and heart from the colour of them; but if they do not reveal the precise, acute, self-confident, but decorous and respectful man of business—why then there is no truth in the clothes philosophy, and Mr. Carlyle is little better than an impostor. Lord Cairns's manner in the House of Lords resembles that of the trusted professional adviser of a great family at my lord's breakfast or dinner table, or out shooting with him in the coverts. There is every disposition to treat him as of the same set; he has every disposition to be so treated. There is no offensive patronage on the one side; no unworthy flattery or obsequiousness on the other; still there is a consciousness of difference and incompatibility. A line, merely imaginary it may be, as devoid of breadth as the line of mathematics, but as long as their intercourse, seems to separate the two men as completely as if it were a gulf. The one cannot step out of the magic circle which hems him in; the other

cannot step within the circumference which keeps him out. Mr. Mortimer Gazebee, the family solicitor, may marry Lady Amelia de Courcy; but though the streams may flow, like the Rhone and the Arve, in the same channel, they keep their distinctness after the junction, and it is long before they really blend. Politically, Lord Cairns's position has been something like this. Even when he was nominally leader of the Conservative party in the House of Lords he always spoke as if he were rather its professional adviser and trusted agent than its chief or head. There is no reason to suppose that his mercantile origin and professional career at all interfered with his success as a leader, except as they affected his own habits of mind, character, and feeling. The Tory peers would no doubt have loyally and frankly accepted Lord Cairns, if Lord Cairns could have loyally and frankly accepted himself. They would have had no misgivings if he

had had none. Though a gentleman of the middle class to begin with, he is as good a gentleman by birth, education, and character as any of them. But the brisk professional manner, the knowing look, the very attitude and gestures with which he pulls himself together to make a smart reply, as from a clever agent to a grumbling tenant or a troublesome mortgagee, have probably disagreeable associations for the majority of the peers, in addition to their æsthetic objections on grounds of taste and style. It is not surprising, therefore, that so long as Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby stand aloof from the leadership of the party, the Conservative peers, in spite of the waste of time involved, should prefer an arrangement which allows the Duke of Richmond to blunder out their unaffected sentiments and his, and permits Lord Cairns later in the evening to explain to his friends, to his opponents, and to the Duke himself, what the Duke really means. Their

relation to each other resembles that of the wooden old sergeant and his clearer-minded and more articulately-speaking wife in one of Dickens's novels. "Lord Cairns is correct in his way of giving my opinions—hear me out," is the admonition which the Duke of Richmond seems sometimes to be mentally addressing to both sides of the House, as he listens, with some curiosity but more complacency, to the minute and lengthened expositions of his noble and learned friend.

Lord Cairns had attained the first place at the equity bar, or at least he divided the first place with Lord Selborne, before his elevation to the highest judicial post in the kingdom. In the Lords, as formerly in the Commons, he is essential to his party in debate. What he has to say is enforced by the credit derived from an unblemished personal character, and by a Parliamentary career as straightforward as is compatible with the windings and doublings of Conservative policy, and

as consistent as the political self-contradictions of his chiefs would allow. Add the training and habits of an English equity lawyer to the essentially Scotch character of an Irishman of Ulster—for there is nothing Irish in Lord Cairns except the habit of substituting in speech the diphthong *oi* for the vowel *i*—and the two main constituents of Lord Cairns's political composition are brought together. Cold, clear, shrewd, and disputatious, prone now to reduce great issues to small verbal quibbles, and now to see portentous consequences in minute verbal distinctions — a tendency not without its uses, though as a prevailing habit the mark of a somewhat petty order of mind—Lord Cairns lacks the largeness of view and the grasp of principle which are necessary to transform the political lawyer, or the lawyer-like politician, into the statesman. His eloquence partakes, of course, of the character of his mind. It is frozen oratory. It flows like water from a glacier; or, rather,

it does not flow at all; for though Lord Cairns never hesitates or recalls a phrase, he can scarcely be called in the proper sense a fluent speaker. His words rather drop with monotonous and inexorable precision than run on in a continuous stream. The several stages of his speech are like steps cut out in ice, as sharply defined, as smooth and as cold. Into all the subjects with which he deals he brings the habits of mind and methods of argument proper to the Chancery barrister. Lord Westbury lately spoke of the common law bar as the less intellectual branch of the profession. But, from the closer connection, it may be, of the common law with the history and political life of England, the less intellectual branch of the profession has, we are inclined to think, furnished a larger proportion of statesmen to England than the more intellectual. Neither branch, it is true, has contributed much of late years. It would be hard to name any conspicuous official lawyer

of either party who has not been rather the bondsman of his erudition and of his professional training than its master, held in subjection to it for the defeat of great political reforms, rather than capable of using it as the instrument of statesmanlike designs. The study of law for the purpose of practice, and the study of law as a branch of history and of philosophy subservient to the art of government, are seldom found together. There are few traces of any contributions of law to statesmanship in Lord Cairns. To say this is not specially to disparage him, for it is as true of his most conspicuous professional and political rivals as of himself. He and they together illustrate the proposition that men with whom politics have been subsidiary to the profession of the law, are little likely, even when their professional ambition has been fully gratified, to make their legal attainments contributory to the true ends of statesmanship. The habit of a life, and the form and colouring

which it has given to the mind, interfere. Rules of practice which they have laboriously learned come to be regarded as rules of nature. Instead of holding with the poet that, "whate'er is best administered is best," Lord Cairns and men of his profession are prone to the yet more questionable doctrine that what they can best administer is best. For this reason it often happens that slender lawyers, like Lord Brougham, prove to be more thorough law reformers than learned practitioners and well-trained judges, such as Lord Cairns and Lord Hatherley.

XII.

MR. GATHORNE HARDY.

MR. GATHORNE HARDY is habitually received as the sure successor of Mr. Disraeli in the leadership of the Conservative party in the House of Commons; and is sometimes hinted at as an actual competitor for the post, or as even now practically dividing it with his titular chief. If there be any rivalry between the two statesmen, it is of a friendly sort. They do not excommunicate each other, like Pope and Anti-Pope. Their attitude is rather the brotherly one expressed in the stage direction in the play of the *Rehearsal*, "Enter the two Kings of Brentford, hand in hand," to which the stage practice used, we

believe, to add, "smelling at one nosegay." But, in truth, whatever his hopes for the future, Mr. Gathorne Hardy has no pretensions to be a second King of Brentford. Mr. Disraeli keeps the royal nosegay in his own hand, even though he may allow his destined successor, now and then, as an act of favour, and as a foretaste of the coming glory, to smell at it. He may permit Mr. Gathorne Hardy to exercise, in his absence, viceregal functions. Occasionally, like an old coachman training a promising novice, he may give him the reins, and let him take the box seat, while he himself sits by, to keep a watchful eye on the driving, and to see that nothing goes wrong. However, all these illustrations fail perfectly to express the relations between the Conservative leader and his first lieutenant in the House of Commons. Without being really a rival, and departing from formal subordination, there can be little doubt that Mr. Hardy does indirectly exercise a certain degree of authority.

He may be compared to a Coadjutor Bishop appointed to check and overrule, under the guise of assisting, a superior of suspected soundness in the faith.

There is one immense point in Mr. Gathorne Hardy's favour, that he has the confidence of the great bulk of the Conservative party, and that Mr. Disraeli has not. If they do not positively distrust their brilliant chief, they do not understand him. He is a potent magician, who has conjured with Conservative principles, which are at the same time "truly Liberal" principles, until his bewildered followers scarcely know whether Toryism does not include, implicitly, the Five Points of the Charter. Mr. Disraeli may practise only white magic, but there is something uncanny about all conjuring. Now, Mr. Gathorne Hardy is no conjuror. There is nothing in him beyond the comprehension of the most ordinary Tory squire, or the most vulgar Manchester Reactionist. He does not soar to the heights nor go down to

the depths. He jogs along the highways, not, even in a political sense, riding across country. He is a Tory after the Tory party's own heart. Gazing on itself, like Eve at the fountain, or Narcissus in the stream, the image which the Tory party sees reflected back upon it is that of Mr. Gathorne Hardy. When it puts the proper charm under its pillow, it dreams of him, as a country girl dreams of her destined husband. The Conservatism of Mr. Disraeli, of Lord Salisbury, and of Lord Derby, widely though they differ, is the deliberate choice of a party connection upon intellectual grounds higher and wider than those of party, and involving a survey of the whole field of politics, and an estimate of social forces and tendencies. Their Conservatism, however sincere and thorough, has its basis in a political rationalism, as the Catholicism of Father Newman has its roots in a theological rationalism. There is a philosophy behind it. Ordinary Toryism distrusts the sceptical premisses even more than

it welcomes the orthodox conclusion. It is not sure that the conclusion will always follow from the premisses, even in the minds which have for the present drawn it thence. Mr. Gathorne Hardy is free from all suspicion. His Toryism is the Toryism of the back benches advanced to the front bench, and elevated to office. In his speech at Bradford, in the recess, he expressed an opinion that the intellectual calibre of the House of Lords was superior to that of the House of Commons. The intellectual calibre of the Conservatism represented by Lord Salisbury, Lord Derby, and Lord Cairns, is certainly superior to the intellectual calibre of the Conservatism represented by Mr. Gathorne Hardy, Sir John Pakington, and Lord John Manners. Mr. Disraeli redresses the balance, and sways it to the other side.

Mr. Gathorne Hardy is a Tory of the old school, with a logical apparatus superadded. His temper, sentiments, and prejudices are essentially those of

the average Conservative. The ideas, however, which in the case of the latter are little more than dim and half-formed tendencies to thought, are with Mr. Hardy precise and clear. In him, commonplace Conservatism becomes articulate and self-conscious; and this is the source of his recognition as, in a certain sense, the organ and representative, though not yet the leader, of his party. He is, perhaps, not sufficiently in advance of them to be that. This, however, is the difference between him and them; that the notions, embedded in the heavy clay of the rural mind, and unable to extricate themselves thence, have with Mr. Hardy become explicit, able to move freely among one another, and to arrange themselves into apprehensible propositions, into logical syllogisms, and even into a connected chain of argument, or what seems to be such. Here lies, in great part, the source of the delight with which the Conservative party listen to him. When he thinks and reasons in his speeches, they, listening, have a

faint reflected consciousness of some unwonted mental process which they believe to be thinking and reasoning. They are sensible of mental exaltation and exhilaration, and their satisfaction with him merges into a satisfaction with themselves. In the quality and number of his ideas, Mr. Hardy does not differ from the most commonplace Tory in the House of Commons; the only difference is that his ideas are distinct, and capable of being variously arranged into propositions and arguments suitable to particular occasions. But the number of mental combinations and permutations which can be effected with a rigidly limited supply of thoughts is scanty; hence a certain monotony in Mr. Hardy's eloquence, which does not redeem, by any variety of topics, the low level on which it proceeds.

Mr. Hardy's speaking is, however, for his audience, or for that part of it which agrees with him, exceedingly effective. Its basis and materials are common both to him and them, and

this adds enormously to their appreciation of the instrumental skill with which he wields forces that they can turn to no account. He is not devoid of oratorical passion of a certain sort. It is not the passion of the statesmanship which absorbs a nation into itself, and speaks and feels for a whole people, nor that of a prophet-like warning; still less, of course, that of revolutionary enthusiasm—it is not the passion of Chatham, or of Burke, or of Vergniaud—but it is more suitable to his topics and to his hearers. It is the passion of the man in possession who is afraid of being turned out. It is anger, blended with virtuous astonishment, and prompted by a scarcely dissembled terror. This seems to be the characteristic feeling of that section of Conservatism which Mr. Hardy represents, and which sees in projects of reform only veiled designs of destruction; the more deadly in effect for being sometimes specious in appearance. The throne and the House of Lords—nay, even pro-

perty and order, law and religion—are, in their view, in danger; and the transfer of power to that lower social stratum which M. Gambetta has invoked in France, is apprehended in England. Mr. Hardy is the chosen champion of the classes who have got, and who wish to keep, and who sincerely believe, that on their doing so the well-being and even the existence of society depend. The "Destructives," against whom they range themselves, are like those mysterious brigands of the first French Revolution, whom Mr. Carlyle describes, who were a vague terror rather than an actual body of men, and who at any rate owed all their importance to the alarms which magnified their numbers and invested them with ubiquity. This passion of fear gives earnestness to Mr. Hardy's eloquence, though it does not elevate it. Range of reading, depth of reflection, nobility of sentiment, play of fancy, are entirely lacking to it. It is made up of fluent, energetic commonplaces, packed into well-poised

sentences, and combined into a duly proportioned structure of speech. What Mr. Hardy has to say is as well said as anything so poor could be. He has vigour of arm and precision of aim, but his weapons are blunt. Nevertheless, he makes a gallant show of fight, and always comes off from the contest as if victorious. A liquid voice, which is never strained to harshness, makes his oratory pleasant to the ear; and his most strenuous invective never passes the limits of a perfect self-possession. Though he has a rattling delivery, Mr. Hardy has followed Hamlet's advice to the players, or acts upon it by a certain instinct of oratoric propriety. He speaks what he has to say "trippingly on the tongue;" and in the very tempest of his passion has acquired a temperance which gives it smoothness. The smoothness is somewhat hard, like that of polished metal; but there is fire beneath the surface, which warms his audience. Indeed, for reasons at which we have hinted, Mr. Hardy's speeches go home more

directly to the old Tory heart than those of any of his colleagues. Under the influence of them, excited benches of enraptured country gentlemen, "in burning row," like Milton's "bright Seraphim," their "loud, uplifted" voices throw in ringing applause to the rafters of the House of Commons, with more zeal than at any other oratorical summons.

Whatever rank be assigned Mr. Hardy as a statesman and as a possible party leader, his short tenure of the Home Office in the last Conservative Government has given him a high reputation as a man of business and as an administrator. Something, no doubt, of the credit which is awarded him may be due to the fact that he had the double good fortune to succeed Mr. Walpole and to precede Mr. Bruce. It is quite possible that if stock could fairly be taken of these successive Home Secretaries, if an exact inventory could be made of their acquirements, and if their natural gifts could be accurately appraised by any

approved mental valuer, Mr. Gathorne Hardy would be found to be intellectually the most poorly furnished of the three. He is a proof that a certain directness and force of character and peremptoriness of temper are more valuable in public life than fineness of intellectual discernment and maturity of judgment. This is especially the case in the Home Department, which is every day becoming less and less of a political and more and more of a magisterial office. Quickness of perception, promptitude in decision, and confidence in action, are the essential requisites for this post; and these qualities Mr. Hardy has in an eminent degree; and some Home Secretaries—his superiors, we dare say, in many respects—have conspicuously lacked them. To gather into the premisses of a conclusion materials which are superfluous for the conclusion itself, and to push inquiry and discrimination beyond the points at which they are necessary to determine action, is the surest way of falling into a hopeless state of bewildered "consideration," and

is likely to end in a wrong decision at last. Mr. Hardy comes of a good business stock; there is a Yorkshireman's hard-headedness about him; and to this quality has been added that habit of authority for which the life of a country gentleman on his own estate and in his own parish is, perhaps, the best training-school to be found in Europe. For some time a practising barrister, and afterwards an active magistrate, Mr. Hardy has that knowledge of the forms and processes of law, and the details of magisterial and county business, which are among the most necessary attainments of a Home Secretary, and which enable him to speak with authority on the non-political questions most interesting to country gentlemen, as well as to be the mouthpiece of their narrow Toryism in party debates. This faculty, which Mr. Disraeli is entirely without, strengthens Mr. Hardy's hold upon the Tory squires, while manufacturing and commercial Conservatives are won over by the thoroughness with which he throws himself into the employer's

side in all controversies between the capitalist and the labouring classes. All these are useful secondary qualifications for party and Parliamentary leadership. But Mr. Hardy lacks the first qualification: a real perception, in their true causes and character, of the issues that are involved, and a comprehensive survey of the field of action. The originating and adaptive mind, which can embody the principles of his party in a policy suitable to the shifting exigencies of the time, is wanting in him. He is essentially a commonplace politician. The country gentlemen and country clergymen who, for political purposes, usurp the name of the University of Oxford, never better marked their jealousy of superiorities than when they rejected Mr. Gladstone for Mr. Gathorne Hardy; not even when they at an earlier date put aside Sir Robert Peel for Sir Robert Inglis, nor when they afterwards chose Mr. Mowbray in preference to Sir Roundell Palmer.

XIII.

MR. W. E. FORSTER.

MR. FORSTER, in a sense which does not imply moral reproach, is the most dexterous Trimmer of his day. The word has passed into disrepute. It has come to express want of principle and self-seeking, and the adjustment of a wavering balance, now on this side, now on that, according to the determinations of an ignoble self-interest. Such is not the sense, however, in which we apply it to Mr. Forster; and such was not the sense in which the greatest of Trimmers understood the term. English statesmanship has seldom been illustrated by higher qualities of sagacity and wit than were displayed by Lord

Halifax—we are not speaking of the present Privy Seal, or of Pope's "full-blown Bufo;" and he accepted the nickname, which even then carried a certain opprobrium with it, as a title of honour. He found something more than constitutional precedents for the character and the policy it denoted. He argued, partly in jest, but more in earnest, "that our climate is a Trimmer between that part of the world where men are roasted, and the other where they are frozen; that our Church is a Trimmer between the frenzy of Platonic visions and the lethargic ignorance of Popish dreams; that our laws are Trimmers between the excess of unbounded power and the extravagance of liberty not enough restrained; that true virtue has even been thought a Trimmer, and to have its dwelling in the middle between the two extremes; that even God Almighty Himself is divided between his two great attributes of Justice and Mercy." Dr. Johnson's doctrine as to the first Whig—("I have always said the first

Whig was the devil." *Boswell*—"He certainly was, sir. The devil was impatient of subordination")—feebly imitated the audacity of Halifax's last sentence; into which, however, even his laughing scepticism shrank from introducing the party nickname that runs through the rest. In his "Character of a Trimmer," the best known, but by no means the best, of his writings, some of which might be studied with profit at present, and notably his "Cautions" on the choice of members of Parliament, Halifax derives the party name in which he boasted from the management of a boat. "The innocent word Trimmer," he says, "means no more than this, that if men are together in a boat, and one part of the company would weigh it down on one side, another would make it lean as much to the contrary; it happens there is a third opinion of those who conceive it would do as well if the boat went even without endangering the passengers." No doubt it is essential to keep a boat from capsizing, if it is to

reach the shore or carry its crew and freight into harbour, and he who helps judiciously to trim it contributes to its speed and safety. But it is doubtful whether the trimmer, the mere ballast—though it be intelligent human ballast, not passively shifted, but actively shifting itself from side to side—discharges as honourable an office as that of the steersman who guides or the oarsman who propels it. Halifax's excuse was this, that in his day trimming was a political necessity, if not a wise politician's first duty. Under the restored Stuarts, it was above all things needful to prevent the boat from capsizing, and to keep it in the mid-course which was equally hateful to one set of fanatics, who were anxious to steer right into Scylla, and to another who were bent obstinately on pulling straight towards Charybdis. The art of statesmanship was then the art of trimming; but honest statesmanship trimmed not with but against the victorious side, and restored the disturbed balance. It is partly because trimming

has usually been of a different character, trying to cast fresh weights into the heavier from the lighter scale, and deserting the weaker for the stronger side, that the name has become odious. Another reason for its unpopularity, doubtless, is that the term, at its best, excludes the idea of strong and stable political conviction, consistent purpose, and fidelity to political friendships and party connections. The Trimmer may be untrue to all these things, because he is true to something better; but, on the other hand, he may be untrue to them, because he is true to something worse, and that is to himself and his personal advancement.

There are no professed Trimmers now; that is to say, there is no body of politicians who call themselves by that name. The term has gone out of our political vocabulary; but whether it be that the thing has ceased, and there is nothing for the word to describe, or that the thing has become universal, and there is nothing for it to

distinguish, is an open question. Are there no more Trimmers? Or are all politicians, Whigs, Radicals, and Tories alike Trimmers? Is Trimmer the political *summum genus* which comprehends all political genera and species under itself? In a sense, not dishonourable, if not positively and intrinsically admirable, there may, very possibly, be something in this latter view. Politics in England, and this must be so in every Constitutional country, follow the drift of public opinion; and statesmanship has at its discretion not the what, but only, at most, the how and the when, the more and the less. In other words, statesmanship in Constitutional countries is sharing the fate of Monarchy in Constitutional countries. Instead of being rulers, Parliaments and Ministers are becoming servants; and the smaller arts of management and persuasion in detail, rather than the larger gifts of wisdom and authority, are becoming essential in politics. If this be so, and so far as it is so, the real leaders of a nation will

be found less and less frequently in Parliaments and in Cabinets. Political life, under the conditions indicated, may always be useful and honest; but, in the sense in which ancient civilisation distinguished liberal from servile work, it will be less honourable than it was. The higher order of minds will insist on living their own life, thinking their own thought, and speaking their own word. Voices, to apply Goethe's metaphor, will not consent to become echoes. Although, so far as the tendencies operate which we have indicated, there will be rather a diversion of intellectual and moral power from politics to other pursuits than a diminution of it, the issue cannot be regarded with complacency. A nation is the worse for being represented to itself and to the world by an inferior and declining order of mind and character. The change is only at its beginning; and the survival of statesmen belonging to an older condition of things veils the extent of its operation. But it seems to be a fact, and is at any rate a

common opinion, that the House of Commons exhibits a less promising recruiting ground for politicians than it once did; and the standard of admission to the Cabinet, as in some of our best regiments, has had to be lowered an inch or two. Other causes may come in to counteract this tendency, which is, at worst, the price paid for an advance in self-government. A keener political intelligence may perceive that the best work cannot be done by second-rate instruments; and an improvement in the mechanism of our representative system may supply men of a higher class of intellect and character in greater numbers to the House of Commons, and to the offices of executive government, than have lately found their way thither.

Regret is inevitable in connecting these remarks, and especially in associating a tendency to political deterioration, with the estimable and well-meaning statesman whose name stands at the head of this article. But Mr. Forster's

Ministerial career has exhibited, the more threateningly because the germs of dangerous qualities are blended in him with great capacities and honourable aims, at least the first stage of this political decline. He is the chief Trimmer of modern politics. That is indeed the claim which in other terms is put forward on his behalf to public confidence. We are told that it is his effort to produce measures which shall please both sides of the House. In other words, Mr. Forster has made the experiment of trying to serve two masters; and the result is what has been predicted of all such efforts. Mr. Facing-Both-Ways is not the model for an English statesman. The English Elementary Education Act was a triumph of political trimming. The measure was framed to pass the two Houses of Parliament, and as a Liberal majority was secured by the quarter from whence it came, by the undue confidence placed in the Minister who had charge of it, and by the indisposition to embarrass the

Government, Mr. Forster spent all his energies in conciliating the Conservative opposition. He was bent on making the measure acceptable to them, and to the majority in the House of Lords. He trimmed the boat to the Tory side. The navigation through Parliament was dexterously performed; but the vessel constructed for that purpose has scarcely proved seaworthy. Already it has had to put in port for repairs, and, if we may judge from the suggestions which have been made, nothing more is contemplated than a little more trimming. The same qualities were displayed, though not so conspicuously, in Mr. Forster's conduct of the Ballot Bill. It is Mr. Forster's fault as a statesman not to look beyond the House of Commons, or at most to enlarge his view only to the House of Lords; to think too much of the passing of a measure, and too little of what it will prove to be when passed. Like some barbarous tribes, who sacrifice to the evil spirit because they feel that the benevolence of

the good spirit is theirs already; Mr. Forster has neglected his Liberal friends for his Conservative adversaries. The administration of the Endowed Schools Act bears traces of this design to curry favour with the Opposition. The result is that, though Mr. Forster took office as one of the representatives of the Radical section of the Liberal party, he is now reckoned as the link between the Government and the Conservatives. It is said that if he is again returned for Bradford, it will be by Tory votes. Members who owe their seats to Tory votes cannot avoid paying the debt by a more or less Tory policy. They take their political complexion from their constituents, as some animals are said to change their colour with that of the food they eat. Mr. Forster has, we hope, force of character and strength of conviction to avoid this catastrophe; but he is running great risk of it. In the meantime he has done not a little to disintegrate his party, and to substitute in Parliamentary contests

the skirmishing of fortuitous bands, gathered from this side and from that, for the regular and organized warfare of rival parties, that is to say, of opposing convictions and principles. The resentment which these tactics have created is confined to a section of the Liberal party. The distrust which they have inspired is far more widely spread; and, unless it be dispelled by a different line of conduct, must affect for the worse Mr. Forster's political prospects and career.

Sydney Smith long ago pointed out that it was Lord Russell's misfortune, with a simple and ingenuous character, to believe that he was endowed with a genius for intrigue. Many of the most serious errors of that eminent statesman's career are due to his own innocent conviction of his skill in finesse. Mr. Forster is in a similar danger of sacrificing the better elements of his character to a certain, almost sinister, faculty of Parliamentary management. Robust common

sense, a sagacity which, though fine, is seldom over subtle, and a hearty recognition of the historic greatness and future destiny of England, which goes for more with the English people than their habit of self-disparagement allows them to show—these are qualities which might insure Mr. Forster a noble career, if he could unlearn his practice of manœuvring with his adversaries against his friends. Though by no means an orator he is an effective speaker, because he has the faculty of addressing himself directly to the topics present to the minds of his audience, and to the difficulties which at the moment engage them. He never rises to interpolate an essay into the middle of a debate which might just as well have been delivered at the beginning or end of it, or still better not at all. There is an air of rugged and homely candour about him. His sentences are often broken, but in their abruptness and their transitions from one form of construction to another, they seem to express

the actual stages of his thought. You see, or fancy you see, the web in the process of being woven, and are indulgent to a few dropped threads and frayed edges. Mr. Forster has improved his natural gifts by art. He is, indeed, one of the most consummate actors in the House of Commons, where every one is more or less an actor. No one supposes that Parliamentary speakers are children of nature, simply pouring out the feelings and convictions by which they are animated without art or premeditation. Mr. Forster's acting always proceeds, however, on a basis of nature. When he has already made up his mind, he can assume an attitude of newly roused attention, and seem to be much struck when some honourable member advances what has been familiar to him long before. He will go, with appropriate gestures, pauses, and tones, through the show of reluctant conversion to irresistible arguments. A certain ruggedness of voice and uncouthness of gesture, and a general

restlessness of limb and of feature, seem to give candid expression to his emotions. These outward manifestations of guileless impulse have come to Mr. Forster's aid as a subtle manager of men, just as the better qualities which they expressed have helped the less satisfactory tendencies which have of late been unduly prominent in his career. In his solid qualities of mind and character, his earnestness and thoroughness, Mr. Forster is a genuine Englishman; he adds to these the shrewdness of a true Yorkshireman; and he is besides the best stage Yorkshireman, whether in the Parliamentary or any other theatre, of his day.

XIV.

LORD JOHN MANNERS.

LORD JOHN MANNERS is a refreshing and soothing politician. In public life he discharges the office of those little patches of green with which painters relieve the eye strained by colours too fierce and intense, or of the pastoral scenes with which grave writers break the narrative of struggle and tumult. He is essentially Arcadian, and there was either a designed or an unconscious fitness in the name of Sydney, under which Mr. Disraeli introduced him into the novel of "Coningsby." The nickname of "the Gentle Shepherd" which the elder Pitt bestowed upon George Grenville, with only

an accidental and momentary appropriateness, might with more but yet not with perfect fitness be applied to Lord John Manners. There is something swainlike in his bearing and demeanour. He is not always, however, quite as gentle a shepherd as he should be. His political lackadaisicalness has freaks of temper in which he rather resembles the Sentimental Shepherd of Canning's nonsense verses—

> "I sits with my toes in a brook,
> And if any one asks me for why,
> I hits them a rap with my crook,
> And 'tis sentiment kills me,' says I."

He goes to war with his shepherd's staff, like David, and shies the stones of the brook, with not so good an aim as the Jewish hero, at the political giant opposite. Lord John Manners is at bottom a very amiable and good-natured sort of man, who does not deliberately think evil of any one; but from his youth up he has always been under the imaginative necessity of impersonating

the spirits of treachery, sacrilege, and anarchy in his antagonists, and of giving to his dissent in opinion the character of holy indignation and virtuous horror. He does not seem able to bring himself up to the mark, unless he can persuade himself that he is defending the throne and the altar, the lowly roof of the peasant and the baronial hall of the peer, against the base designs of wicked men. He addresses the House of Commons and Tory meetings as if he were demanding from a jury the conviction of a prisoner on a criminal charge. This is an old habit with Lord John Manners. It displayed itself in his first literary efforts, and has been prominent in his sayings and doings ever since. His view of English history appears to be that it is the record of a series of struggles continued to the present time, and still going on, between some very good men and some very bad men, in which the good men have usually had their heads cut off, with a Providential view to the crown of

martyrdom without which goodness is not poetically complete, or been put into prison, or sent into exile, or, in the present evil days, been condemned for long terms of years to the Opposition benches, with only just such brief snatches and tastes of office as, after the fashion of Mr. Squeers's pupils with the milk-jug, to whet their appetite for more. In Lord John Manners's earliest volume of poems it was "treason's rebel horde," which, with more reason than rhyme, "brought to the block a Strafford and a Laud." Charles I. was, of course, the "sainted monarch" whose "blameless life" was cut off by "religion and philosophy;" it was Heaven which "in mercy to a nation's moan restored the Stuart to his father's throne;" while "cold Dutch William" conspired against "the gentle father of his wife." Gentle is a novel epithet to apply to James II.; but it does not express a more original view of his character than is elsewhere taken of that of Wolsey, whom Lord John Manners describes as

"by wealth untempted and by power unawed,"
"despising pleasure and contemning fate."

We dare say that Lord John Manners may have revised some of these youthful judgments; and as he has since been a Minister of the Crown, he would now probably shrink from the constructive treason of describing the last of the Stuarts as "the last of England's rightful Kings." But his boyish follies illustrate a habit of his mind which has outlived these examples of it. To be upon his side is to possess all the virtues; it makes the sour and sullen James II. a gentle prince, and converts Wolsey into a saintly ascetic, untempted by wealth, power, and pleasure. This fierce antagonism is carried into contemporary politics, and Lord John Manners in his younger days looked forward to a time when "England once again may hear The shouts of Roundhead and of Cavalier;" and actually appealed to the late Lord Derby to raise his battle cry, assuring him that "full

many an English sword would then Leap from its scabbard's rest, And thousands good of Englishmen Press after Stanley's crest," in order to rescue England from the "cold and heartless men" who had swayed too long the councils of the State, and betrayed to bitter foes "the Church's widest gate." These things were the follies of a boy; but Lord John Manners is a boy still, at between fifty and sixty. He speaks to-day very much as he used to write twenty-five or thirty years ago. "On our side are Virtue and Manners; on their side are Gladstone and Guilt," if we may so parody Moore, is the burden of his oratory. Dickens describes one of his characters as looking less like the middle-aged man he really was than like a damaged boy, a youth who had gone through some mysterious process of depreciation. This is precisely the effect which Lord John Manners's opinions, oratory, demeanour, and general aspect make on the observer. There is nothing senile about him;

there is little that is properly juvenile; but there is a sort of mature puerility of an indefinable but unmistakable kind. The grey, almost white, hair contrasts strangely with the smooth and but slightly faded face, the light and slender figure, and the step which has yet a certain elasticity about it. Lord John Manners's style of speaking is quite in keeping with his political character. The virtuous indignation, the singsong periods, and the up-and-down utterance, are relics of the Cambridge Union. Oratorically, he is still scarcely out of his teens; and if he were chronologically in them, he might be regarded as a youth of promise.

From the point of view of science, Lord John Manners is interesting chiefly as the solitary example of an otherwise extinct species. Political naturalists who should desire to study the characteristics of the Young England party can best do so in his person. The party is dead, but he lives and embodies its essential features, which

can be observed in him better than in any second-hand descriptions. He is the only survivor of it. Mr. Disraeli, who was the centre of the coterie, never in any proper sense belonged to it. He was as little a Young Englander as Wilkes was a Wilkesite. The young noblemen and gentlemen who grouped themselves about him were a sort of private pupils whom he undertook to instruct in Parliamentary theatricals. The thing was an amateur affair altogether; and when the Free Trade policy of Sir Robert Peel, and the secession of Lord Derby from his Cabinet, and of the Protectionists from among his supporters, gave earnestness to politics, and laid a new basis of party divisions and contests, Young Englandism vanished. A histrionic and literary affectation disappeared in the presence of realities. The doctrines of the monarchy and the historic estimate of the Stuarts which were commended to Mr. Disraeli, not only by the direct teachings of his father, but by the theocratic ideas natural to

his race, and to the faith of his ancestors, fitted in with one or two tendencies, operative with young men of rank thirty years ago. The controversies between the Legitimists and the Orleanists in France, and the pretensions of the Carlists and Miguelists in Spain and Portugal, had given rise to a sort of imitative literary Jacobitism in England, which, upon its ecclesiastical side, had been strengthened by the Tractarian movement, and was in revolt against the bourgeois Conservatism, fast sliding into middle-class Liberalism, of Sir Robert Peel. So long as Mr. Disraeli was a speculative outsider in political life, the fancies of these young men had a certain affinity with his own theoretic politics; and there is no need to attribute any sinister motive to their association. To speak as if he had acted Sir Mulberry Hawk to Lord John Manners's Lord Frederick Verisopht is to mistake at least Mr. Disraeli's character. Young England was a make-believe, but it was not a conscious imposture. Mr. Disraeli,

however, had one great difficulty with his young men. Though one or two among them, and notably the late Mr. George Sydney Smythe, afterwards Lord Strangford, had considerable ability, the majority of them had no common or noticeable quality except that of youth. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, undertook to persuade them, and did persuade them, that to be young was to possess every moral and political excellence. A nation, he said, can be saved only by its youth; they were part of the youth of England; and the inference was plain that England was to be saved, how and from what it was unnecessary to determine, by them. Gustavus Adolphus, Cortes, Loyola, Pascal, Bolingbroke, Pitt, had accomplished great things while they were yet young men; Lord John Manners and his associates were young men who, it is true, had not accomplished anything great; still the parallelism failed in only one point, and the general idea of a certain connection between youth and heroism or genius

was consoling. One of our earlier English plays is founded on the idea of a country in which the conduct of life is in the hands of children; the grown men and women are at school or under tutelage, while the very old men and women are at infant schools or out at nurse. The Young England theory had an absurdity something like this as its basis. The disciples of the doctrine came down to the House of Commons every night to save England in white waistcoats and straw-coloured gloves. The thing was little more than foppery; and the record of it might more appropriately be included in Mr. Planché's "History of British Costume" than in any history of parties. The Young Englanders were the descendants of the macaronis and dandies of an earlier period, carrying their affectations into literature and politics as well as into dress. Their ideas had as much relation to reality as a fancy-dress ball of a particular period, or a theatrical revival of Mr. Charles Kean's, had to

history. Young Englandism was a thing of stage sentiments, stage costumes, and stage properties generally. A certain amount of superficial benevolence went with it. Its professors liked to conceive themselves in the attitude of feudal barons distributing alms and advice to a docile peasantry at their castle gates, and surrounded by faithful retainers, to whom they might give protection, and from whom they would receive service. But their political charity generally began at a greater distance from home than might have been expected. Asked, "Who is thy neighbour?" Lord John Manners has seemed disposed to reply, "The Lancashire Factory Operative." The peasant in the vale of Belvoir was overlooked, because he was so close at hand.

Since the absorption of Young England first into the Protectionist, and afterwards into the Tory party proper, on the definitive secession of the followers of Sir Robert Peel, the career of

Lord John Manners has been that of his leader upon all great questions, and, indeed, upon every question, great or small. The office which he has occupied in the successive Administrations of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli has usually been held by men less remarkable for any considerable political or administrative faculty than for culture and taste, or courtly breeding. Besides Lord John Manners, the late Lord Carlisle, Mr. Cowper-Temple, and Mr. Layard have been among its recent occupants previous to its tenure by Mr. Ayrton. The first Commissionership of Works is the nearest approach we have in England to a Ministry of the Fine Arts; and Lord John Manners has discharged its duties without giving cause for complaint. During the Parliamentary recess, and the long winter of Conservative discontent and opposition, he is a popular and frequent out-of-doors orator. The fluent commonplaces of Tory rhetoric flow mended from the tongue of the heir presumptive to a dukedom.

The sentimentalism of the quondam Young Englander goes home, like the virtuous appeals of the minor theatres, to the hearts of the Conservative working men; and Constitutional Associations are not aware of the energy with which Lord John Manners has denounced "the fruits that Constitutions bring." Lord John Manners is a not ineffective platform orator; though he might say of his eloquence what he says of his poetry, "a plaintive, melancholy note is mine." He speaks the language of a good heart and a not very strong head, governed by sentiments and personal attachments and distrusts, rather than by positive and stable convictions.

XV.

MR. WARD HUNT.

MR. WARD HUNT throws a great body of light upon English history and upon political literature and art. He is precisely the man whom a true-born Briton, with any pretensions to patriotic feeling, would point out to the once popular Intelligent Foreigner, if he still travelled in this country, as the type of an English statesman. The Intelligent Foreigner was himself, at one time, almost an English institution. He was invented by Lord John Russell, in the days of the first Reform Bill, to express amazed incredulity at the monstrous anomalies which the Whigs of that day proposed to abolish, and to be

enlightened as to the beneficent practical working of such anomalies as the Whigs found it convenient to retain. A perfect library of useful knowledge —it was in the days of the Society so named— was poured in upon his devoted mind. He retired to France with a better theoretic knowledge of England than most Englishmen possess, and began to write for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, to which, under different literary pseudonyms, he has continued to contribute ever since. The influence of his training has always been perceptible in his writings. The anomalies of the English Constitution have the same sort of attraction for him as the polypus of Agna had for Balbinus. It is much to be deplored that the Intelligent Foreigner could not remain in this country to have known Mr. Ward Hunt. Truth, as our Poet Laureate tells us, in closest words may fail, when truth embodied in a person makes its way to common apprehension. Mr. Ward Hunt is the substantial embodiment of much that is most

characteristic in our institutions, dispositions, and habits. No one would think of pointing out Lord Russell, Mr. Gladstone, or Mr. Disraeli in explanation of the popular image of John Bull, as the pencils of our caricaturists and the pens of our political humourists and satirists have delineated him. The allusions to roast beef and plum pudding, to wassail bowls, and flagons of ale, and mighty jorums, which fill our literature, would awaken only a sort of incredulity if associated with the attenuated and careworn statesmen who have most recently occupied the chief post in the councils of their Sovereign. It is not so with Mr. Ward Hunt. He is calculated to convey to the mind of an observant foreigner a very impressive, and indeed almost overwhelming, idea of the material resources of this country. "Those limbs were made in England." Columns of statistics, and tables of trade and revenue returns, would tell the tale of our physical greatness far less perfectly. Mr. Ward Hunt would be an

admirable diplomatist to send over to any country which threatened us with hostilities, and just the person to exhibit to some secret envoy despatched to spy out the nakedness of the land. He is an illustration of the greatness of England, and of the solid foundations on which it rests. *Si monumentum requiras, aspice.*

A legend prevails that Mr. Ward Hunt was one of the reading-party in the Highlands whose sayings and doings are recorded in the late Mr. Clough's *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich;* and that he figures in that poem under the not altogether dissimilar surname of Hobbes—"the great Hobbes, contemplative, corpulent, witty," whose dancing exploits in a kilt are celebrated:—

"O stoutest, O rashest of creatures, mere fool of a Saxon,
Him I see frisking and whisking, and ever at swifter gyration,
Under brief curtain revealing broad acres—not of broad cloth."

If this statement, which is very positively made, with respect to the identity of Mr. Ward

Hunt and the Hobbes of the Bothie, have any foundation—and the comparative chronology of Mr. Ward Hunt's University life and of Mr. Clough's makes it possible—it gives an additional interest to the career of Mr. Disraeli's Chancellor of the Exchequer. Perhaps some subtle connection may be found between the advocate of Women's Suffrage and the suggestor in the Vacation Pastoral of the treatise "On the Laws of Architectural Beauty in Application to Women." However this may be, Hobbes is the philosopher of the reading party; and though that is not precisely the character which Mr. Ward Hunt sustains in the House of Commons, it must be remembered that philosophy, in its naked and abstract form, seldom survives in a man who is approaching the fifties, and who has spent fifteen or twenty years in Parliament and at Quarter Sessions. Converted into practice, in the shape of good temper and of good sense, it may still be traceable in Mr. Ward Hunt, who

has as large a share of both of these gifts as any member on his own side of the House. This feature favourably distinguishes him from some of his colleagues and associates. The prevalent Conservatism of the time is Conservatism vehemently exasperated—Conservatism in a panic of fear and a passion of hate. There is something of the virago in Mr. Gathorne Hardy; Lord John Manners is always electric with virtuous indignation; and Sir Charles Adderley passes his public life in a sort of political frenzy. In different degrees, this epidemic rage characterizes the Tory party. Almost alone, Mr. Ward Hunt is conspicuously free from it. His Conservatism is cheerful and good-humoured, based rather on content with things as they are than upon any fear of what they may become. It is to be hoped that this type of Conservatism, which would be almost extinct but for him, will have a revival, for it is of a much pleasanter order than that which is in the ascendant just now. Out of

novels and political traditions, the old-fashioned rural Toryism, which is a matter of easy-going genial temperament rather than of very strong dogmatic conviction, is scarcely to be found. It cannot very well be spared from the House of Commons, where it sweetens and moderates public life. Colonel Wilson Patten has it, and Mr. Ward Hunt has it; and, besides them, scarcely any one on their side of the House, or, at least, on the front Opposition Bench. Mr. Ward Hunt, we believe, never provoked an adversary, save by failing to lose his own temper, and by growing cooler as the opponent became more heated; but this self-command, though often a most irritating quality, is not on that account an object of reproach. Sir Anthony Absolute's indignation at not being able to drive his son into a rage is a specimen of the only sort of angry feeling that Mr. Ward Hunt ever rouses.

Mr. Ward Hunt's official career has been a short one. He had no place in the first and

second Administrations of Lord Derby; indeed, his Parliamentary life began subsequently to Lord Derby's first accession to power, and he had been only two years in the House of Commons when Lord Derby's second Ministry was formed. On the return of Lord Derby to place, after the defeat and resignation of Lord Russell and his colleagues in 1866, Mr. Ward Hunt was appointed Financial Secretary of the Treasury. The office brought him into close relations with Mr. Disraeli, as Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the nomination was probably made at Mr. Disraeli's suggestion. The selection showed Mr. Disraeli's knowledge of men. Mr. Disraeli is not celebrated for his command of details; and he has never been able to affect much interest even in his own Budgets, except so far as they might have political consequences. He has mastered them for the purpose of first exposition; but he has seldom known enough of them to be able to defend them point by point in the minute discussions of Com-

mittee. Some one was necessary on whom this task could be devolved, and Mr. Ward Hunt was just the man for it. Mr. Disraeli did the high imaginative business, the rhetoric, and the general mystification. He connected the financial schemes of the Government, when they were not simply inherited from Mr. Gladstone, with the higher politics. Mr. Ward Hunt went through the details, added up the figures, and explained the special operation of this, that, and the other tax or remission of taxation. He had fairly earned his appointment by the perseverance and skill with which in 1866 he had run his Cattle Plague Bill side by side with the measure of the Government, and by that rivalry had succeeded in diverting into the pockets of agriculturists compensation out of the public purse for their trade losses. This is the rural notion of the proper business of a Finance Minister; and Mr. Ward Hunt's nomination as Secretary to the Treasury

and his subsequent appointment, when Mr. Disraeli became Prime Minister, to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, naturally gave great satisfaction both to landlords and to farmers. In accepting this office, he expressed to his constituents a certain modest diffidence at succeeding to a place which had been occupied alternately during many years by such political giants as Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone—he was unable, in the absence of prophetic gifts, to add Mr. Lowe. So far as can be judged from a nine or ten months' tenure of office, Mr. Ward Hunt made a very fair Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had no opportunity of proving himself a great and original financier, and there is no reason to suppose that in any circumstances he could have done so. But the ordinary duties of administration in Downing Street and of explanation in the House of Commons were sufficiently well performed. Mr. Ward Hunt is a country gentleman, with a head for figures, a taste for

business, and habits of administration acquired as a country magistrate and Chairman of Quarter Sessions. It is customary to sneer at chairmen of Quarter Sessions. Next to the mayors of country towns, they are the favourite objects of a Philistine contempt which tries to disguise itself by affecting to be excessively anti-Philistine. But the qualities which give a man priority among his equals in these narrow and limited spheres are those which constitute superiority in the House of Commons; and apprenticeship to local business ought not to be a bad discipline for Imperial service. On the whole, Mr. Ward Hunt, we should say, was much such a Chancellor of the Exchequer as another more distinguished Northamptonshire man proved himself. Lord Althorp was an honest, business-like country gentleman, who brought into political life the excellent qualities which he displayed on his estate and in his county. If Mr. Ward Hunt were the heir to an earldom and a great estate,

his position in the Conservative party would probably be the counterpart of that which Lord Althorp held among Liberals; for though rank and wealth are no substitutes for ability, they immensely help it. They make a little go a long way, and are equivalent now, as they were in Pascal's time, to a start of about five-and-twenty years in public life.

Mr. Ward Hunt's oratory is not of a particularly impressive character. It somewhat resembles informal talk from the bench at Quarter Sessions or at the magistrates' meeting, and is apt to be a little hurried and flurried. Mr. Ward Hunt does not so much plunge into the debate as flounder into it. Compared with Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli, or even Mr. Gathorne Hardy, he enters it as his supposed prototype, Hobbes, entered the bathing-pool at Tober-na-Vuolich—

"There Arthur, the glory of headers,
Leapt from the ledges with Hope, he twenty feet, he thirty;
There, over-bold, great Hobbes from a ten-foot height descended,
Prone as a quadruped, prone, with hands and feet protending.'

In Parliamentary discussions Mr. Ward Hunt does not usually do even as much as this, but rather rolls over a half-foot height into the water, like the seal or sea-bear entering his pond in the Zoological Gardens. But he is a sufficiently good speaker for the purpose of clear statement, explanation, and argument; and since he is not an orator by nature, his abstinence from any attempt at rhetorical artifice deserves to be gratefully acknowledged. Mr. Ward Hunt is a sensible country gentleman, thoroughly versed in the business of the House, useful on Committees, and ready to give his services ungrudgingly in helping forward the non-political part of Parliamentary work, which is as important as the matters which engage the strife of parties and determine the fate of Ministries. Members concerned in private bill legislation speak in the highest terms of his sagacity and fairness. For a statesman, Mr. Ward Hunt is still comparatively young, being a year or two short of fifty: and though his career will of course in a great degree depend on the

fortunes of his party, he probably has a considerable future before him. He has just those solid, and balanced, and slightly commonplace, qualities of mind and character on which, in English political life, years and experience confer even an exaggerated authority.

XVI.

MR. HENLEY.

VISITORS to the House of Commons are usually struck by two dark figures, which are almost always to be seen perched on the third bench behind Mr. Disraeli in an attitude which somewhat suggests the "Twa Corbies" of the Scotch ballad. Their appearance denotes keen watchfulness of the fray, and a certain interest in its result, without direct participation in it. They seem after a fashion to preside over the course of the debate, as if they were two of the Three Fates, mysteriously bereaved of the third. In reality, they are two of the most respected and respectable members of the Conservative party,

withdrawn from the Cabinet, in the one case by advancing years, in the other by a temperament too sensitive for the rough work of the Home Office in troubled times—Mr. Walpole, the most soft-hearted and gentlest-mannered of Conservative lawyers and politicians, and Mr. Henley, the most hard-headed and the hardest hitting of Tory squires. There they sit side by side during the long hours of the debates, not often exchanging a word, but reciprocating probably a silent regard, conscious each of the other's presence and of a mystic communion, which speech would interrupt rather than convey: Mr. Walpole, by a sort of moral endosmosis and exosmosis, if we may borrow the language of physiologists, absorbing firmness from Mr. Henley, and Mr. Henley imbibing a more tender and considerate humanity from Mr. Walpole. Mr. Henley, who is close upon his eightieth year, is interesting, inasmuch as he marks a stage in the development of the old Tory squire, as he is known to us in

plays and novels, and in Lord Macaulay's history, into the Conservative country gentleman of our own day. He is the link, happily not as yet the missing link, between these two phenomena, and enables the critical observer to understand how the one can have sprung by inheritance from the other. Mr. Henley's family is not, we believe, of long standing in the squirearchy; but its comparatively recent elevation from a lower social grade condenses into one or two generations the transition of manners which history spreads over a much longer period. Though not resembling them in any sense which involves a moral imputation upon him, Mr. Henley helps to make intelligible to his contemporaries such portraitures as those of Fielding and of Smollett's country gentlemen, the faded recollection and tradition of which, with added features of vice and depravity, Thackeray has revived in Sir Pitt Crawley. In this particular, art and design, we are inclined to suspect, have aided nature. Mr.

Henley has humoured and cultivated his faculty of homely shrewdness. He has selected that as his line in public life and Parliamentary debate; and has adapted himself to it in his language and general get-up. The immense pockets of his shooting-coat suggest the presence of samples of corn for market day, with buckles for reins, whipcord for lashes, and similar provisions for an emergency; there is a groomlike strictness of nether garments, and a peculiarity of stride which recall horseback journeys on agricultural business. Mr. Henley's language in debate resembles that of a shrewd farmer talking politics in the market-place or at the ordinary. He exhibits a good deal of real sagacity, accompanied by an exaggerated pretension to it, a knowing suspicion of a design on the part of nearly everybody, of the world in general, in short, to take him in, and a resolute determination not to be "done," and especially not to trust fine words. Probably, when Mr. Henley thinks himself most cunning,

he in reality displays the most childlike simplicity, and is most in danger of being imposed upon when he is shaking his head and chuckling over his own precautions against being hoodwinked. Such is the common liability of human nature.

Mr. Henley is in his way a very accomplished rhetorician, and mainly so through his apparent disregard of all the rules of rhetoric; of which, however, he observes the spirit, when he most obtrusively neglects the letter. If rhetoric is the art of persuading, that is, in its application to spoken language, of bringing an audience to the same point of view and attitude of mind as the orator, Mr. Henley is a master of it. It is common to speak of Sir John Coleridge as a persuasive speaker, because he puts on what is commonly known as a persuasive manner, affects an insinuating air, and adopts dulcet tones. But the question is, does he persuade? and the answer is, that as a rule he does not. In fact, there is nothing so little persuasive as a conventionally

persuasive manner. One suspects a pill beneath the sugar coating, and gall under the honeyed words. "Too plausible by half" is the mental verdict passed upon the conventionally persuasive orator. Mr. Henley's rhetoric is the reverse of all this. He surrounds what he has to say with a sort of prickly husk; and the worth of the fruit is judged of by the protective and defensive hull which envelopes it. Another rhetorical device which Mr. Henley practises is not less successful. It is a favourite practice of orators to dress up small ideas in fine and long words, which for a moment make them pass for more than they are worth. A rhetorical style has come to mean a stilted, and polysyllabic, and flowery style. A disposition to supply small ideas and occasions with a misfit of great illustrations is one of the commonest defects of Parliamentary eloquence. Mr. Disraeli, in his earlier style, and in his frequent reversions to that earlier style, illustrates this habit. Mr.

Lowe, in his more ambitious moods, occasionally falls into it. Mr. Gladstone, perhaps, is not wholly free from it. Mr. Henley is the most conspicuous example which the House of Commons presents, not only of its complete avoidance, which would be a merely negative excellence, but of the successful employment of the opposite rhetorical practice. He uses the effect of contrast with elaborate care, and with great skill; but he always contrives that the contrast between the substance of what he has to say and the manner of it shall seem to be in favour of the substance—which is in itself no slight praise of the manner. To make the ideas seem better than the words is all but the highest triumph in the use of words. The perfection of literary and oratorical art is of course the noble expression of noble truths in language exactly fitting them. It is no small achievement in rhetorical artifice to make what is, perhaps, little above commonplace seem vigorous and original by clothing it

in words of so homely and simple a character as to give to commonplace itself an aspect of superiority in contrast with the lowly attire in which it is robed. An obtrusive unpretentiousness is one of the most effective forms of self-assertion. With these rhetorical designs, Mr. Henley has possessed himself of a rich vocabulary of some of the most ignoble, and, at the same time, some of the frankest and least reserved words and phrases in the English language. He not only calls a spade a spade—which is an unobjectionable practice—but calls some other things, which it is not necessary to mention, by names which might as well be left to the learned seclusion of the dictionary and to the unlearned freedom of the tap-room. A rich and varied assortment of comparisons, illustrations, and metaphors, derived from the farm-yard, the pot-house, and the magistrates' room, make up the greater part of Mr. Henley's oratorical equipment.

Such as they are, he uses his weapons with

great dexterity. They are rather the flail or the cudgel than the foil; but with them he is more than a match for most of the fencing-masters of debate. His homeliness is more effective than their magniloquence. Compare, for example, one of Mr. Lowe's most celebrated perorations with one of Mr. Henley's. In a passage probably indistinctly remembered, rather than directly imitated, from Canning, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer intimated that he did not covet a single leaf of the laurels which would encircle Mr. Gladstone's brow in the event of the abortive Reform Bill of 1866 becoming law. "His be the glory of carrying it; mine, of having to the utmost of my poor ability resisted it." There was not much glory, as it happened, to be shared in the matter; for Mr. Gladstone did not carry his Bill, and Mr. Lowe's "poor ability" in resisting it prepared the way for household suffrage. Mr. Henley, with reference to another measure, announced that when every other means of oppo-

sition had failed, he would lie down on his back, if he could do nothing else, and shout "Fudge! Fudge!" Mr. Henley's rhetoric strikes us as better in itself, as well as more original, than Mr. Lowe's. Sir Francis Baring on one occasion attributed a particularly ingenious, and to the Ministry of that day discomfiting, amendment of Mr. Milner Gibson's to the direct inspiration of the author of all evil, by whom he intimated that Mr. Gibson had been assisted in drafting the terms of his motion. References, never perhaps strictly necessary, to this distinguished party-leader in another place—Dr. Johnson's first Whig—are usually wrapped up in circumlocutionary forms. Mr. Henley never has recourse to any roundabout phrases; and plainly describes what he dislikes as "a device of Old Nick." This homely familiarity is genuine rhetoric. Mr. Henley has successfully followed at least the second half of Lord Bacon's precept to think with the wise, but to speak with the vulgar. His

tone of voice and accent add to the impression which his choice of words and phrases makes. It is about sixty years since Mr. Henley took his degree at Oxford, and the English which he speaks is understood to be the rustic English of his county, or a modification of it. It is that of his parish rather than of his college, or perhaps it is only his own individual English. That is a point which must be left to those who have the gift of discernment of tongues. However this may be, the peculiarity adds to the effect with which he supports the part he has chosen on the Parliamentary stage, that of the shrewd, sagacious, plain-spoken country gentleman, who is not disposed to mince matters; who calls things by their right names, without much regard to the sensitiveness of ears polite, and who does not handle his weapons with kid gloves. With all this uncouthness and homeliness, which are, probably, quite as much matters of habit and of art as of nature, there is a certain air of distinction which

reflects his sense of himself as an English country gentleman who does not need to dress for the part.

Mr. Henley was President of the Board of Trade in the first and in the second Administrations of Lord Derby, and was one of the most sensible and business-like heads that department has recently had; but, on the ground of age and failing strength, he declined office in the third Cabinet of that Minister, and preferred to discharge tutelary offices for his old colleagues from the third back bench. The ex-Cabinet Minister, or even the Privy Councillor who has never been a Cabinet Minister, and who has declined to enter the Government, or has not been allowed the opportunity of declining office for fear he might not decline it, occupies a very peculiar position in the House of Commons. The prefix Right Honourable, by a sort of Parliamentary superstition, seems to make virtue enter into a man. It advances politicians of the fifth order to the third, or even to the second rank in the House

of Commons. The slightest—or, as Americans would say, the slimmest—men acquire a certain degree of force and robustness when once they have kissed hands and taken the oaths as members of the Privy Council. The process has given importance to Mr. Cowper-Temple and to Lord Robert Montagu. It adds the gravity of a supposed impartiality to the weight of former office, and of close party connection; and an ex-Minister can intervene on critical occasions with a degree of authority far greater than he would possess if he spoke from the front bench. It also enables him, if he be so minded, to exhibit a most damaging degree of candour at the expense of his former colleagues, to whom he affects to be bound by those party and personal ties, the severance of which, as Mr. Disraeli said when he got rid of the Marquis of Salisbury, constitutes one of the real bereavements of human life. Mr. Horsman and Mr. Bouverie have often shown the superiority of their sense of public duty to mere personal feelings, when the personal feelings were

those of Lord Russell or Mr. Gladstone. The position of an ex-Minister is a great one in the hands of a master of the arts of annoyance. It is equally powerful for the purpose of assistance and service, when the disposition to help former colleagues and old friends survives official separation. Sir George Grey on one side of the House of Commons, and Mr. Henley on the other, have given many examples of the generous and considerate use of this power, without sacrificing to old connections real independence of opinion and of action. Mr. Henley rendered the more substantial help to Mr. Disraeli's projects of reform since he was not a convert of office to the necessity of household suffrage, which indeed he had proclaimed while in Opposition to be the only means of avoiding that "ugly rush" of democracy which he foresaw as the result of less decisive settlements. His withdrawal from public life, in which he still exercises a useful influence, would make the House of Commons less truly representative even than it now is of English life, character, and history.

XVII.

LORD HALIFAX.

THE good-humoured "chaff" attributed to Cicero when he saw his diminutive son-in-law girt with a gigantic weapon, "Who has tied Dolabella to that sword?" or a question something like it, is suggested by some titles and the wearers of them. Sir Charles Wood seems to have appended himself to the historic title of Halifax, rather than to have assumed it. It is not so much that he wears it as that he is absorbed in it. The shadow of a great name is more potent than the substance of a meagre politician. The present Lord Halifax has no connection either of lineage or of character with the illus-

trious Trimmer of the close of the 17th century, who was a man of wit and of letters, nor with the consistent Whig of the beginning of the 18th century, who was a successful Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Woods have never had any dealings with the Savilles or with the Montagus. It is almost a pity that families are not allowed to register titles, as the proprietors of magazines and newspapers are sometimes in the habit of doing, not so much for their own use as for the purpose of preventing their employment by unauthorised and unconnected persons. The habit which new peers have of adorning themselves with historic designations is sometimes a little confusing to genealogical speculators whose insight exceeds their information. These ingenious persons are apt to trace family resemblances where there is no family connection, except a common descent from Adam, or from the arboreal animal with pointed ears in whom Mr. Darwin recognises the grandfather, if we may shove the beast one step back,

of the human race. The other day an implied reproach was addressed to the present Lord Granville for not sharing or conspicuously manifesting the Homeric tastes of his supposed ancestor, the Lord Granville of George II.'s reign, and not beginning every day with the "Iliad" or the "Odyssey." Sir Charles Wood's assumption of the title of Lord Halifax was due, it may be, to his gratitude to the constituency which put him aside in favour of Mr. Akroyd; but probably this feeling was blended with some dim recollection of the great Marquis, and the distinguished Earl who had illustrated the name before. If Sir John Pakington, as a notable Minister of War, should solicit elevation to the peerage with the title of Lord Chatham, who was a great War Minister, he would only be following, and would scarcely be exaggerating, a precedent.

The present Lord Halifax's career will probably be better understood when the secret history of the past half century is written than it is now.

and among the secrets to be revealed, when memoirs and correspondence now under lock and key are disclosed, will be the well-kept secret of the abilities which have enabled him to play the part he has sustained in public life. His career begins with a puzzle. Lord Halifax took a "double-first" at Oxford. It is useless to ask how he can have done so; he did so. The fact remains, though the explanation is imperfect; and the University Calendar bears witness to it. A double-first did not, perhaps, mean quite as much half a century ago as it does now; but it meant something, and whatever it meant goes to the credit of Lord Halifax. A minute examination of all the speeches which he has delivered during an active Parliamentary life of forty-six or forty-seven years would probably fail to produce so much as a single sentence from any one of them which betrays even a reminiscence of scholarship. Lord Halifax's abstinence from hack quotations and a schoolboy parade of erudition is creditable

to him; but the unimpeded passage through his mind of a certain amount of humane literature, without leaving a trace or depositing a memory, is a curious psychological phenomenon. It would be hard—perhaps not impossible—to find a literary allusion in any of his speeches. One, indeed, is well known. When commenting upon a supposed self-contradiction of Mr. Disraeli's, he asked whether there were two Benjamins in the field. This, it is believed, is the most brilliant thing Lord Halifax ever said. If there is anything cleverer in what the Americans call his record, let it be produced. Lord Halifax's early entrance into official life, and his steady progress in it, present, as has been intimated, some difficulty to the philosophic inquirer. A partial explanation may be found in the fact that he was the son-in-law of Earl Grey, whose family affections are as well known as his patriotism, with which they gracefully blended in the public service, and especially in the distribution of

patronage. Having acted for some time as Private Secretary to Lord Grey, Lord Halifax (then Mr. Wood) became, after the passage of the Reform Act, Patronage Secretary to the Treasury, or what in Parliamentary slang is called the "Whip," in his father-in-law's Administration, in succession to the late Mr. Ellice, commonly known as "Bear" Ellice. Probably Lord Halifax is better versed in the real history of the period which preceded, included, and immediately followed the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 than any living man or ("Bear" Ellice excepted) than any man who ever lived. The Private Secretary and the Whip know, if not all the secrets of their chiefs, yet sometimes a great many secrets which the chiefs do not know. We dare say Lord Halifax, if he were so minded, could tell Lord Russell some things about the passing of the first Reform Bill and the management of the last unreformed and the first reformed Parliament, which would very much surprise that venerable

statesman, who is supposed to be the very Reform Act itself, animated and locomotive.

It is probable, reasoning backwards from what he is to what he was, that Lord Halifax made a decently good Whip. A distinguished member of the existing Government is said to have remarked of the present Speaker of the House of Commons, who discharged under the Ministries of Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell the functions now energetically and creditably performed by Mr. Glyn, that he had filled the most undignified office in the Administration without any forfeiture of personal dignity. The qualifications for such a post as this are very rare, and Lord Halifax had some of them. He had social position, to begin with, which is not a slight advantage. He was placed by birth and connection at that point of the social scale at which differences of rank are merely formal and titular, and do not interfere with perfect freedom and equality of intercourse. He was a country gentleman, the

heir to a not quite new baronetcy, the son-in-law of an Earl, and a man of University distinction. Whig noblemen and squires were not offended by the necessary familiarities of an unceremonious office when they came from his hands. Whig merchants and Radical manufacturers were delighted with them: they felt that they were in society when talking with him, or when being talked to by him, and that they had a momentary glimpse of high life. He could tap a lord on the shoulder, or take him by the coat-collar on personal, and not simply on official grounds, or as a part of State policy or a branch of the art of government, without provoking a smouldering resentment at the party exigencies which allowed of these liberties. He was a man of the world, and a man of society, without being a man of the City, important part though the City is both of the world and of society. It is essential that a Whip should have the art to seem least busy when he is really most busy. He is often doing his best

stroke of work when he appears to be only lounging and talking with chance comers. This is the last thing which a politician transplanted to the House of Commons from the City learns. A man who is always rushing about, as if he were anxious to catch a railway train, or to keep an engagement on 'Change on which a promising bargain depends, is often in effect strenuously idle or worse than idle, just as the apparent idler is often most quietly and productively industrious. Conversance with at least the outlines of political questions, a varied, if a superficial, acquaintance with affairs, and an insight into the lighter and prompter motives and impulses of men, are essential in Parliamentary management; and these, we should be inclined, from his subsequent course and his present position, to think Lord Halifax had. The economic knowledge which he undoubtedly possessed, though he has seldom made very successful use of it, enabled him to talk commerce with men of business. It gave him some-

thing in common with them; and the social and political position which he had not in common with them, they would have been only too glad to have had in common with him.

Lord Halifax's political life has borne to the end—though it is premature to speak of the end—the impress stamped on it at the beginning. At present, in the office of Lord Privy Seal and in the House of Lords, he is a sort of magnified and glorified Whip, a transfigured party-manager and confidential adviser, or Professor Emeritus of Parliamentary and Administrative tactics. In the House of Commons, as Mr. (and afterwards Sir Charles) Wood, he was in succession Secretary of the Treasury and Secretary of the Admiralty, Chancellor of the Exchequer, President of the Board of Control, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Secretary of State for India. Well versed in the routine of public business, and not capable of much beyond it, he is always spoken of, in the conventional language of political eulogy at de-

fault, as a first-rate administrator. The proof was never apparent; it belongs to secret history. His colleagues, however, believe in him, or acquiesce in his belief in himself; and in the temporary absence of the head of a department, Lord Halifax is ready to take his place and to throw everything into confusion at a moment's notice. As Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Russell's first Ministry, Lord Halifax, though sound enough in his general theories, marked the lowest point to which the notorious incapacity of the Whigs for practical finance ever fell. He was at that time the scapegoat of the Government in public opinion, and the chosen mark of all the ridicule and contempt which were lavished on it. Nevertheless, he managed to get himself believed in as a necessity, and was never permanently left out of any Ministerial combination in which the Whigs had a share. This success is certainly not due to any proficiency in oratory or efficiency in debate. As a speaker, Lord Halifax is probably the very

worst ever known during the present Parliamentary generation to whom anybody was obliged to listen. It is difficult to assign pre-eminence in badness to his manner or to his matter, if, indeed, there can be said to be either a matter or a manner in his speeches. A dislocated incoherence in substance, and an inarticulate rapidity of utterance, reduce the listener to something like distraction. When the peculiar acoustic qualities of the House of Lords set off these natural oratoric advantages, the effect may be imagined. Lord Halifax's eloquence resembles nothing so much as the sounds with which a lively deaf-mute accompanies his finger-talk. Allusion has been made to the apparent inoperativeness of Lord Halifax's University training and attainments upon his mind and character. There is, as has been said, not a trace of them in his speeches. They have never moulded nor coloured a sentence, nor dictated an allusion. Lord Halifax never, so far as it is possible to assert a universal negative, gave

expression to anything which in the proper sense could be called a thought—a conception of his own, taking shape and hues from the soil in which it grew and the influences about it. During the course of his life, he has said "Yes" or "No" to a great number of propositions which have been submitted to him from without; and this is about all.

Of course, there is something positive to be set against all these negative qualities. Lord Halifax is a man of great quickness of superficial apprehension and acquisition. In this way one accounts for his getting-in his University attainments, which he promptly gave out in examination, and, in giving out, appears to have parted with for ever. The testimony of some of those who have been associated with him in administration is that he sees with marvellous rapidity all that he does see of any question which is submitted to him, which is the *minimum visibile*, the least that can be seen, about a thirteenth, say,

or some smaller portion, of it; and on that he proceeds complacently to act, as if it were the whole. Nothing short of a miraculous reconstitution of his mental faculties could enable him to see more. This promptitude of wrong action upon imperfect conceptions has given Lord Halifax a certain reputation as a man of administrative capacity; while the readiness with which he will give a bad opinion, while men of sounder and larger intelligence are slowly feeling their way to a good one, makes him an adviser full of sagacity and resource. It is sometimes more consoling to a Minister in difficulties to have a wrong answer to a critical and urgent question than to have no answer at all. Lord Halifax's chief fault as a speaker—to refer now to substance rather than to manner—his apparent disjointedness, is due probably to the fact that in every subject he sees only a number of isolated points, and does not go deep enough below the surface to connect them with each other. In the hasty con-

sultations of the Treasury Bench, where point comes up after point, this defect is not so promptly apparent. Lord Halifax has another source of strength. He is armed with a vast number of inapplicable precedents, arising out of circumstances bearing no analogy to those which engage public men at the present time, which he appeals to in an authoritative and convincing manner. His great claim, however, to office in the present Ministry is that he is a busy, mobile, talkative person, who sees. and converses with a great number of people; and that it is much better that he should talk to his large circle of acquaintance in and out of the House of Lords with a bias in favour of the present Government than with a prejudice against them. In discharging this office, he has returned practically to his first political functions. Lord Halifax is believed to have been the real framer of Lord Palmerston's second Administration. He is understood to have been the medium of communication between Lord

Palmerston and Lord Russell; and the good-natured indifference of the former and the discontented apathy of the latter often left him free to do what he pleased with men and with places. This is just the work in which Lord Halifax delights. He inherits the old Whig traditions of combination and management, which were very useful in their day, if a little obsolete and practically inconvenient now; and, for good or evil, he probably exercises no small power on the personal adjustments and readjustments of the present Ministry.

XVIII.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

THE Duke of Argyll has given many proofs, not superfluous in these days, that our old nobility is yet, in some instances at least, competent to hold its own against the rivalry of new blood and new energies in literature as well as in politics. It would seem as if, except in the rarest instances, the advantages of abundant leisure and opportunities were less favourable to success and distinction in life than the stimulus of necessity. Up to a very recent time there has been one exception to this rule. The English aristocracy, which has given few names of the first order to literature, the arts, or science—it

has given a few which are in everybody's mouth —has not been unproductive of great statesmen. It has spent itself, as most men would be inclined to do who have the choice offered them, in action rather than in thought and study. Men of letters have usually been eager to exchange literature for politics; men of politics have far more rarely, and scarcely ever voluntarily, abandoned affairs for letters. Of late years, however, the great English houses seemed to have ceased to produce statesmen. Among the younger members of the aristocracy, there are scarcely any who can be named as likely ever to occupy the highest places in Parliament and Administration. The Cavendishes supply a respectable contingent to public affairs; the house of Lansdowne is creditably represented in both Chambers, and there are two or three young peers of undefined promise in the Lords; but the great families, as a rule, make but a scanty appearance in the first ranks of political life, and there is no prospect of any

vigorous reinforcement of them in the future. This deficiency in the crop of statesmen may be due simply to the accident of a bad political harvest; but it may, on the other hand, be owing to permanent causes. The conditions of Parliamentary life in England offer, possibly, less temptation and opportunity to young men of leisure, wealth, and intelligence than they formerly did. The means by which a seat is to be won, and the means by which it is to be held, are not tempting to men of independent minds. There are signs, to which it would be invidious to point, that men of this class, who might seem devoted by their lineage to the State, are withdrawing from politics into letters, art, or science, and to the enjoyment of a cultivated ease. The Duke of Argyll exhibits a tendency to other provinces of intellectual labour in association with an active participation in public business. The attractions which have drawn him to affairs have not wholly separated him from letters.

Possibly, if his power of engaging in politics had depended on his being able to win and keep a seat in the House of Commons, he might have missed either opportunity for statesmanship or leisure for science and literature.

In one respect the Duke of Argyll differs honourably from all but a very small minority of politicians in either House. He brings to politics a mind variously cultivated and exercised in different departments of speculation and research. He has, moreover, a certain distinctness of character. He is really a personage in public life. Some of his colleagues and opponents seem little more than masks. They are officials or ex-officials, and whatever individuality they once possessed seems to have been absorbed by the functions they exercise or have exercised. "Their nature is subdued to what they work in, like the dyer's hand," and they scarcely admit of delicate discrimination any more than so many dyers' hands dipped in the same colour would do. No doubt,

the intimate friends of Mr. Childers and Sir Stafford Northcote, of the Duke of Richmond and Lord Kimberley, are able to recognise personal traits in them which separate each from the other, and in the secret recesses of their being, if such there be, there may be great divergencies. But, politically, the characters of Mr. Tweedledum and Lord Tweedledee do not allow of, or, at any rate, would not repay discrimination. They might shift offices, and even, as Dickens somewhere suggests, change minds, without anybody finding out the difference. The Duke of Argyll is far above the material which serves merely for the padding of a Cabinet. He is a man of force of character and of mind. He has reaped twofold honours in literature and in politics, though he can scarcely be ranked as a double-first. In both he is essentially a polemic. When he first entered the House of Lords, a very young man, he had a weakness for attacking the late Lord Derby, who used carelessly to brush his antagonist

aside, declaring that his assaults did not hurt him, while they amused the Duke, who boldly returned to the charge unconscious of discomfiture. A certain pugnacity of bearing, as of a very game bird, has gained the Duke of Argyll, as Indian Secretary, the macaronically punning nickname of *Cocculus Indicus*, said to have been bestowed upon him, in a moment of inspiration, by a witty bishop. There is a dispute on this point, some authorities contending that the name was given to the Under-Secretary for India, Mr. Grant Duff, by a well-known member of the House of Commons. The term suits both the reputed sponsors and their political god-children so well, that by a coincident felicity it may very easily have had a double origin and application. Be this as it may, there is something decidedly gallinaceous in the Duke's demeanour. There is an air of the fighting-cock about him. To transfer the illustration from feathered to featherless bipeds, he bears, as an orator, a resemblance to

a very emphatic and combative divine. He is the Boanerges of the House of Lords. He speaks in a loud and monotonous voice, like a Scotch preacher addressing a large congregation from a hill-side in a high and contrary wind. He is an earnest and fluent speaker, not so much powerful as overpowering, with a close Scotch logic, a perfervid Scotch temper, and a Scotch lack of humour. His oratory resembles preaching rather than debating; and his attacks on the Opposition have had many a counterpart from Scotch pulpits in polemics against the Scarlet Lady.

The features which have marked the Parliamentary orations of the Duke of Argyll characterize him in literature. There, too, he is essentially combative; and he attacks the greatest chiefs of research and speculation with the same eager confidence as that which he displayed in his assaults upon Lord Derby. He goes squaring round the circle of the sciences, now aiming a

blow at Mr. Darwin, now delivering a thrust at Professor Huxley or Professor Tyndall, now skirmishing with Sir Charles Lyell and Sir John Lubbock, and finally launching out against Mr. Mill. The spectacle is interesting if only as an illustration of courage. It is valuable, too, as giving in some degree the measure of the Duke of Argyll as a writer. He belongs to the tribe of Answerers. Every great writer has his Answerers, as the nobler animals have their predaceous parasites. The Answerer is under no necessity of framing an original conception of his subject. He is not called upon to combine the details of his knowledge into a harmonious and complete whole. He does not strike out any original track of investigation. He simply follows the order of ideas of the writer on whom he fastens, supplying what he thinks to be the necessary contradictions and correctives. He dogs closely the footsteps of the explorer, watching for those false steps which the most successful

pioneer cannot avoid, and which are often the conditions of hitting at last on the true path. This work, though not of a high order, is by no means useless. The Answerer may be completely incapable of evolving a lofty scientific conception, or framing a comprehensive theory. Protracted and difficult research may be beyond him; but nevertheless he may do a very useful work in detecting a flaw of logic here, or an error of observation there; and in giving clear form to the popular conceptions, or the prevailing doctrines, with which a new theory has to contend. This service the Duke of Argyll has rendered very effectively in his "Reign of Law," and his "Primæval Man." Both books were essentially the works of an Answerer. They were parasitical books, so to speak, deriving their life and support from greater works of a higher organization; but they are creditable specimens of their sort. They belong to the order of speculation fostered by the Victoria Society, and

formerly represented by treatises on the Harmony of Geology with the Mosaic Narrative.

Here we have a feature of the Duke of Argyll's scientific and speculative writing, which somewhat diminishes its value. It seems always to be animated by an ecclesiastical and theological after-thought; and to veil, when it does not set forth, a religious apology. The Duke of Argyll does not push matters to the extreme exhibited by Mr. Gladstone, who, in the Introduction to his Liverpool Address, says that he has read in some daily newspaper that Mr. Herbert Spencer is one of the first thinkers of the time, and who apparently is entirely ignorant of Mr. Spencer's scientific and philosophic researches, and knows nothing of his writings save as they abut upon theology, and are reported to be dangerous, like those of Mr. Winwood Reade, and Comte, and Strauss, to adopt Mr. Gladstone's strange grouping of heresiarchs. The Duke of Argyll is incapable of such a confusion of the scientific

and speculative tendencies of the age with the supposed theological bearings of a small portion of them. But he too writes rather as a theologian, seeking to disarm science and to watch over the aberrations of philosophy, than as a student of science and philosophy for their own sake. The earliest works of the Duke of Argyll were all ecclesiastical and theological, or, to use a narrower word, were even all Presbyterian; and this disposition, derived perhaps from some drops of the old Covenanter blood, to see danger in speculation, and to rush in with hasty reconciliations of divergences which, if time is allowed, will reconcile themselves, shows more scepticism than faith. Science and philosophy will not consent to be used for a purpose. These patched-up truces, where there is no essential hostility, often end in open war.

This feature of the Duke of Argyll's writings is due quite as much to the conditions under which through life his studies have been pursued

as to his early training and inherited views. Actively engaged as he has been in Parliamentary and administrative life, it would have been strange if he had found leisure for independent investigation, or for original speculation. It is much to his credit that he has read so many of the best books of our day, and has read them not passively, but critically and minutely. Such a task cannot have been pursued without great advantage to himself at least, and his comments and objections may often be studied with some advantage by others, and even by the eminent writers whose opinions are canvassed. The reputation, however, which the Duke of Argyll has won in literature and in Parliamentary debate will be extinguished in a far loftier fame, if he should prove himself equal to the great responsibilities and duties which rest upon him as the responsible Minister for India. With the exception of the Marquis of Salisbury, no administrative statesman of the first order has of late been en-

trusted with the conduct of Indian affairs. The Duke of Argyll's previous official experience as Lord Privy Seal and at the Post Office was not, perhaps, a very valuable preliminary discipline for that momentous work. The English public is newly roused to a sense of the duties incumbent upon it in India, and the perils which await their tardy or inadequate performance. If the Duke of Argyll has the courage and capacity to meet the obligations and to disarm, so far as wise policy can do so, the dangers of the situation, he will add to the historic fame of his house, and secure a higher place than he has yet won among English statesmen. But to attain this end, he must have the rare courage, rarer in the India Office than in any department of State, to inform himself at first hand of facts, to see things with his own eyes, and to act upon his own deliberate convictions, instead of guiding himself by traditions of the office, looking at things through the spectacles of permanent "heads," and doing

the bidding of the most experienced manager. The Duke of Argyll has shown in social matters an independence of mind which needs only to be transferred to politics in order to enable him to do good service. Instead of acting in the spirit of Lord John Manners's immortal couplet, which it is not necessary to requote, he has perceived that if our old nobility is to live, it must not be ashamed to associate itself with laws and learning, and must court commerce, and the wealth that comes from commerce. While through one of his sons he is in alliance with royalty, through others he is or was connected with the trade of London, Liverpool, and New York. "To my own proper shame be it spoken," says Rob Roy in Scott's novel, "that has a cousin wi' accounts, and yarn winnles, and looms, and shuttles, like a mere mechanical person;" and the sentiment of Rob Roy would doubtless have been echoed by the McCallum More of his day. That the McCallum More of our own day has overcome it, and has

entered into the views and practice of the Baillie Nicoll Jarvie, shows a shrewdness of perception and a power of subduing prejudice to common-sense which ought to be of use in the conduct of public affairs.

XIX.

SIR JOHN DUKE COLERIDGE.

SIR JOHN DUKE COLERIDGE bears a famous name, which he has illustrated by additional titles. He has multiplied its claims to respect, if he has not enhanced them. Even a cipher placed after figures of some intrinsic worth increases their value ten-fold, and Sir John Duke Coleridge is far from being a cipher. Perhaps he is destined to be remembered in future rather as a respectable member of a distinguished family than on his own personal account. There are some names which recall to us groups rather than individuals, or remind us of a pre-eminent glory and a society of minor and

reflected lights. Men speak in the plural of the Scaligers, the Darwins, the Kembles, the Coleridges. It is this distinction of name and race which will pick out Sir John Duke Coleridge from the ruck of successful lawyers, of transient Attorneys-General, and, if he have luck, of Chief Justices. He illustrates a variety of the Coleridge genus, and, we may add, genius. This motive to curiosity in him has of late been absorbed in a more intense, though temporary interest. To the great majority of the uninstructed British public, the name of Coleridge, we fear, now suggests in the first instance and most strongly that of Tichborne. In this association it will be embalmed in whatever English equivalent we may have for the *Causes Célèbres*. Imperial Cæsar stops a bunghole. Sir John Duke Coleridge is predominantly thought of now as the man who maintained for many weeks and months a not unequal contest of wit and resource with the individual known as the Claimant, and who in the end carried off at

would not have tolerated these intolerant minds. Able men, who could not restrict themselves within the circle of their practice, have escaped from it into art, into poetry, into science, into theology, into anything but scientific jurisprudence.

Sir John Duke Coleridge's refuge has been theology, as the name he bears almost required. The philosophy of the great thinker who has given that name its chief and its lasting lustre, had in theology its points both of departure and of arrival—so far as it ever arrived. Its foundations were laid in theology, and theology was its superstructure, whether it were a solid reality or but the airy fabric of a vision. The same element penetrates the verse of his son, Hartley Coleridge, and the fancies and speculations of his daughter, Sara Coleridge; and it is found not less in the writings of his nephews than in those of his children. It animates the criticisms of Henry Nelson Coleridge, even when

they deal with subjects that seem of literary interest only. The father of the present Attorney-General was, as all the world knows, the friend and correspondent of Arnold, and the friend and biographer of Keble; and Sir John Duke Coleridge himself has beguiled his official and professional leisure by translating "The Mirror for Monks," besides contributing, if report is to be trusted, theological and ecclesiastical essays to periodical literature. Coleridge gave a philosophy to High Churchmanship, and to that curious blending of High and Broad Churchmanship which was found in the theology of Maurice and of the two Hares—a theology which exhibits a transition from High to Broad Churchmanship, the former not quite put off, the latter not quite put on. Sir John Taylor Coleridge represents it in its High Church result; Sir John Duke Coleridge is a High Churchman, verging towards the Broad Church.

To the present generation the man Coleridge

least a qualified and provisional victory. Such in the transitions of time is the fate which has overtaken, in popular recognition, a name once and still symbolic of the highest flights of transcendental philosophy, and the subtlest beauty of a mystic imagination and a delicate and airy fancy.

Sir John Duke Coleridge, by an inherited peculiarity, represents a not infelicitous blending of law and of letters. Like his father, Sir John Taylor Coleridge, happily still living, he has combined the two pursuits in a manner the more creditable for being, in these modern days at least, rare at the English bar. The career of Talfourd has shown that the successful practice of an arduous profession and the competent discharge of magisterial duties are not incompatible with the most graceful literary tastes and the most accomplished literary art; and that of Mr. Justice Grove adds the fame of a splendid scientific capacity and noble scientific discoveries to

the other illustrations of the English bench. How much literature Sir John Duke Coleridge has blended with his law is ascertainable; how much law he has blended with his literature, no one precisely knows. It is, perhaps, owing to the peculiar character of the English legal system,—if system that may be called which system has none,—that though in some of its most successful votaries it has been associated with intellectual achievements lying remote from its own field, yet a master of philosophical jurisprudence has seldom been found in the ranks of its successful practitioners. He would be regarded with as much alarm as a druggist with a taste for experimental chemistry, or a sea-captain of an astronomical turn of mind. The works of Bentham, of Austin, and of Maine did not proceed from practising lawyers. The minds which produced them could scarcely have tolerated our chaos of principle and arbitrary rules of practice; and attorneys, in their turn,

is a tradition. Probably no picture that has been painted of him preserves his true image as exactly as that which Mr. Carlyle has drawn in a few pages of his Life of Sterling. In Sir John Duke Coleridge, with many features of utter dissimilarity, it is, perhaps, possible to detect some traces of a family resemblance to Carlyle's sketch from memory. The differences are of course remarkable, and they are not all to the advantage of the greater man. Carlyle has noted in the philosopher of Highgate that his irresolution of character was expressed in his very gait as well as in his discursive and drifting speech, which made Hazlitt say of him: "Wonderful talker, very—if you let him start from no premisses and come to no conclusion." It showed itself alike in his walk and conversation. He rolled about, as he strolled, taking now this side of the path, now that, as if there were no object ahead of him at which he aimed —making great preparations and setting-out, as

Carlyle has it, no-whither.. In all this his grand-nephew bears little resemblance to him. He has always known what he aimed at, has kept it clearly in view, and has pressed forward to it steadily, without any purposeless meandering from side to side of the road to preferment. When Sir John Duke Coleridge has changed his side, he has done so once for all and decisively, to put himself on a smoother and less impeded path towards the political and professional prizes which are the natural objects of a lawyer's career. The likeness to his illustrious kinsman, which is lacking in some particulars, expresses itself in what, so far as Carlyle's description enables us to judge, seems almost a reproduction of the tones of the voice, which, it is sometimes said, give the truest reflection of character, and in which family resemblances are most persistent. The speech of the Attorney-General is a sort of melodious monotone; and the monotony sometimes becomes a

little tiresome. There is a kind of nasal mellifluousness about it, which enables the listener to realise more fully Carlyle's reminiscence of the plaintive snuffle and sing-song in which the greater Coleridge discoursed of the "om-m-mject" and "sum-m-mject." Something also of the preaching manner which characterized the sage is noticeable in the lawyer. It does not amount in the latter quite to a sermonising tone, but it is expository and didactic. The Attorney-General answers a question in the House of Commons, or explains a measure, as if he were unfolding a divine philosophy to a circle of rapt disciples. He seems as if he were descending from a region of transcendental ideas, in which he had his habitual dwelling, to mingle with the coarse realities of a lower life. A visitant from "worlds whose course is equable and pure" to a world whose course is nothing of the sort would no doubt find the friction of this jostling and bustling life, with its hindrances

and strifes, rather trying; and Sir John Duke Coleridge's aspect of patient endurance and saintly martyrdom occasionally gives way to an unsaintly querulousness and irritation. The air and tones of lofty contemplation and gentle compassion are now and then interrupted by some very bad language and some very shrill scolding, which have much the same effect upon the listener as those sentences of the boatswain in one of Captain Marryatt's novels which open with exaggerated courtliness, and end in the most outrageous Billingsgate. The conflict of the real and ideal in Sir John Coleridge finds vent sometimes in a rather sharp explosion. It is possible that Apollo, working out his term of penal servitude, as a day-labourer at the walls of Troy, sometimes lost his temper among the rough handicraftsmen whose words and ways rudely intruded on his recollections of the immortal society of Olympus. If so, his demeanour must have slightly resembled the god-like anger,

tempered by a sort of divine forbearance, with which Sir John Duke Coleridge at once resents, and submits himself to, questions, contradiction, and banter in the House of Commons.

After all, a more earthly Attorney-General would, perhaps, serve the purposes of the Government better than the god-like being who condescends for a term of probation to be the chief Law Officer of the Crown. The impression which Sir John Duke Coleridge makes upon observers is that of a man who is dreadfully bored in the House of Commons, and whose work there is to him mere drudgery, to which he applies his hand as seldom and with as little of a will as is possible. Never was any Government so completely left in the lurch on legal matters as Mr. Gladstone's Administration has been since, to its great loss in many ways, Sir Robert Collier was induced to resign the Attorney-Generalship for the office of a judicial member of the Privy Council. The Law Advisers of the Crown are

seldom present in the body in the House of Commons; and when they are present in the body, they are usually absent in the spirit. Sir George Jessel is too much absorbed in his profession to care very much for politics; and Sir John Duke Coleridge, though not strictly shut up in his profession, seems to have been unable to acquire an interest in politics. The contrast between the present Law Officers of the Crown and their predecessors in the last Liberal Government is remarkable and somewhat depressing. Sir Roundell Palmer spoke with an authority which belonged to the real and not merely official head of the Bar, and with a more than professional weight of capacity and statesmanship. Sir Robert Collier, though he failed of a great success in the Courts, was a sound political lawyer, interested in the House of Commons and its business. The assistance which was given to the Government by successive Irish Law Officers, by Mr. Sullivan, now Master of the Rolls in Dublin, and by Mr.,

now Baron, Dowse, has never been forthcoming from the present English Attorney and Solicitor-General. Sir John Coleridge has not shown himself, as it was expected he would do, a power in debate. When he first entered the House of Commons, he made one or two set speeches, somewhat resembling academic prelections, which, set off by a tall and commanding figure, a striking head, upon which the eagle which is said to have destroyed Æschylus might plausibly have dropped its tortoise, a composed and restrained demeanour, and a silvery voice, a little monotonous, perhaps, but clear and sweet, had a considerable success. But in debate, Sir John Duke Coleridge has proved himself entirely ineffective; and he is apparently released from the obligation to active service of this kind. He had a wonderful opportunity of making by a single effort a first-rate Parliamentary reputation, when he was put up to reply to Sir Roundell Palmer on the Irish Church Bill. Never did a more complete

disappointment befall. Sir John Duke Coleridge acquitted himself after the fashion of another Sir John, when, according to the stage direction in Shakspeare's Henry IV., "Falstaff, after a blow or two, runs away." There was a slight affectation of crossing swords; and then Sir John Duke Coleridge altogether quitted Sir Roundell Palmer, and ran away into generalities which had been used by every Liberal speaker on the Irish Church question during the last half century. Perhaps the failure was designed. It may have been a species of political malingering, a contrivance to escape service by assuming incapacity for it. Some travellers tell us of an African tradition that certain apes have the gift of speech, which they decline to use lest they should be set to work. Has Sir John Duke Coleridge profited by this wisdom of our (Darwinian) ancestors? With many of the qualifications of an orator, the Attorney-General lacks the one thing essential to a debater—promptitude of resource and readiness

in reply. There is a tradition, which may record a fact, or may be only a fable of character, that even on circuit, Sir John Duke Coleridge required a period of retirement and seclusion preparatory to a speech after evidence. He has never had a reputation as a cross-examiner, success in which office calls for the same faculties as the debater requires; cross-examination being indeed debating reduced to its first elements of dialogue. We have heard the present American Minister in England described by some of his own countrymen as having been the best five minutes' speaker in Congress. At the close of a debate, when everybody was getting impatient, General Schenck could rise and put the Iliad of the controversy into a nut-shell. Sir John Duke Coleridge's claim to distinction is the reverse of this. He is the best forty days' speaker in England, when he has had twice forty days to prepare in. In the time of the patriarchs, oratory on this scale might be permissible. But now, when life is

short, art, on the scale of Sir John Duke Coleridge's celebrated Tichborne speech, is a little too long. It is a tribute to the general superiority of Sir John Duke Coleridge's mind and character that he should have attained his present professional and Parliamentary position in spite of a lack of the special qualities usually held to be essential to such success. Particular inaptitudes have yielded to a vivid and conquering force of mind.

XX.

MR. AYRTON.

MR. AYRTON may not rank among our statesmen, but he is at least one of our public men. If he has not achieved fame, he has compassed notoriety; and if he is not a distinguished member of the present Government, he has from time to time made himself a very conspicuous one. He is prominent, if he is not eminent. Fifteen years have passed since he presented himself to the electors of the Tower Hamlets. Scarcely any one knew who he was, or whence he came; but he won the affection and confidence of that metropolitan constituency, and has kept them, if not up to the present moment, of which there

may be some doubt, at least up to the time of his re-election on assuming the office he now holds. Mr. Ayrton soon made his mark in the House of Commons. He speedily established a high reputation as a bore; and as one of those formidable bores who, because they cannot be put down, must be listened to. No speaker was as frequent as he, especially in Committee, where every member may speak as often as he likes. The odds then were that a stranger entering the House would find Mr. Ayrton on his legs. It was safe to take him against the field of six hundred and fifty members.

Mr. Ayrton's manner is usually that of a man explaining a difficult subject to himself, and sure of never wearying the auditor who is most present to his thought. An air of authoritative exposition is curiously blended with one of rapt and docile attention. As in the case of Death and the Lady in the monumental image, the two persons are involved together;

and where the didactic Ayrton ends and the listening Ayrton begins the most expert analyst would find it difficult to determine. The look of severe authority with which the words are formed upon the tongue melts into a smile of admiring reception as they fall upon the ear. Plato's statement that thought is the mind's dialogue with itself applies to Mr. Ayrton's speeches. They are dialogues with himself. The doctrine of some psychologists as to the duality of the mind is confirmed by this analysis of the First Commissioner of Works into the speaking and the listening Ayrton. An American author has lately dwelt upon the necessity under which a writer labours of imagining that there is at least one reader whom he never wearies, who sympathizes with all his moods and admires all he says, and to whom, instead of a cold abstract public, he can in fancy appeal. Mr. Ayrton, as a speaker, has found this devoted, all believing, all enduring listener, not in any fictitious person, but in him-

self. Of course, this inter-Ayrtonian dialogue is sometimes interrupted by cries and other signs of impatience from without the magic circle in which the member for the Tower Hamlets holds sweet self-communion, but they are of little avail. No interruption can deprive him of the ear to which he principally speaks, which is not what is metaphorically called the ear of the House, but literally and truly his own. Nothing short of a count-out can take from him the one listener who represents to him all other listeners. Mr. Ayrton's self-appreciation is never expressed by anything like those explosive chuckles which with Mr. Beresford Hope are the outward and audible sign of his inward and spiritual appreciation of the good things that bubble up within him, and of which, by a sort of seigneurial right, he grants himself the first enjoyment. Mr. Ayrton's outward testimony to himself never goes beyond a smile of pleased and half-surprised recognition of a cleverness even greater than he had thought.

This absorption of Mr. Ayrton in himself, and his exclusive regard to the feelings of the other Ayrton, have been the source alike of what is most and of what is least creditable in his career and demeanour. They have impressed a certain political churlishness on both. The rudeness with which at a Reform meeting he censured the Queen for not giving her countenance from a palace balcony or window to a great party procession, and the sentence with which he signalised his acceptance of his present office, and in which he spoke of himself as the sworn defender of the public purse against the designs of "architects and market-gardeners," are unfortunately characteristic of the man. Seeing everything in Ayrton, as Malebranche saw everything in the Divine Being, the Queen and the people with whom he has to do are but shadows and symbols, not needing to be handled with any special delicacy. To Mr. Ayrton, Dr. Hooker was evidently only a species of market-gardener, or like the boy in

Squeers's school, who, having spelt and defined "botany, a knowledge of plants," was bound to make himself useful in weeding the garden. In the worst things that he does, it is probable that Mr. Ayrton is actuated by a certain sense of public duty, or by a dispassionate disregard for any one but himself which answers the same purpose. A man who is careless of giving pleasure or indifferent to giving pain is free from the temptation to laxity or jobbery. He will deal with human beings as if they had no more sensitiveness than so many Babbage's calculating machines. The courtesies of life involving a waste of stationery and of time, Mr. Ayrton abandons the practice of writing letters, and substitutes for them official memoranda, as the means of conveying his wishes and instructions. It may, however, turn out that the courtesies of life are worth what they cost in pens, ink, and paper; and that the irritation and sense of insult under which official persons perform their tasks may in-

terfere with the quality and quantity of the work done. Cheerfulness and zeal are worth buying, even if pounds, shillings, and pence have to be paid for them. They enter into the market value of services, and when they can be purchased for good words and a courteous demeanour, it is bad economy not to buy them at that small cost.

It is unfortunate that political accident should have placed Mr. Ayrton in an office in which he has had to deal, as the representative of the Government, with men to whom it is almost a want of gallantry to show scant courtesy. In genius, as it is often remarked, there is an essentially feminine element, and artists and men of science are often unduly sensitive. Still, it cannot be forgotten that Mr. Ayrton's quarrel with Dr. Hooker, was preceded by a quarrel with Mr. Barry. He got embroiled with the architect before he was embroiled with the "market gardener." It is not that Mr. Ayrton is blunt and outspoken; if he were so, he would be more

bearable. He has a suave way of saying annoying and unjustifiable things. It cannot be said that he ever loses his temper. The misfortune is that he keeps it, and that it is a very undesirable temper to keep—not violent, but what in popular language is called "ill-conditioned," or, in still plainer language, "nasty." Mr. Ayrton has not a hot temper; but with him, as with Milton's atmosphere, the "air burns frore; and cold performs the effect of fire." There is an icy impertinence about him, which by some correlation of forces converts itself into fiery heat in the minds into which it passes. The natural gift of insolence, which he possesses in an eminent degree, and which he has improved by practice, has its function in Parliamentary life. It is well enough employed in meeting the confident but less cultivated flippancy of Lord Elcho; but for the transaction of business with artists and men of science it is ill adapted. When Mr. Ayrton declared on one occasion that he did not profess

to be a great authority on the subject of art, and that probably he did not know much more about it than the noble lord the member for Haddington, the sneer was well deserved. But the tone which is admissible towards a pretentious amateur is out of place when directed to the masters of science or art. Mr. Ayrton is not more happy in dealing with bodies of men than with individuals. The legal validity of the now cancelled Rules and Regulations with respect to the Royal Parks and Gardens, was not open to question; but Mr. Ayrton, if he had apprehended the sentiment of the House of Commons, or of people outside it, and the degree in which an understanding, not perhaps absolutely encouraged, yet not disclaimed, ought to bind the conduct of gentlemen, would never have promulgated them. Mr. Ayrton apparently does not understand an understanding; what is, or may be made, law is right; and the feelings of people are to him as the feelings of the men on a chess-board.

The mischance which placed Mr. Ayrton in an office requiring in a special degree refinement of taste, perception of and regard for the feelings of others, tact, and a high-bred courtesy of manner, is incidental to our system of Government. A place had to be found for a man whom it was dangerous to leave below the gangway when the Ministry was formed. At first Mr. Ayrton was accommodated in the Treasury; but Mr. Lowe's power of rebuffing and offending people was found quite equal to all the occasions of that important department; there was not enough work of this kind to be divided among two such adepts in it as the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his first Financial Secretary; and they spent, it is reported, on each other the unexhausted faculty of annoyance which they could not bestow on the public. When Mr. Layard found that the Cabinet was not likely to open its doors to him, and resigned the Board of Works for the Mission to Madrid, the oppor-

tunity was at once seized of restoring peace to the Treasury by promoting Mr. Ayrton. It is not, perhaps, strange that the Commissioner of Works should have practised in his new office the arts, and exhibited the qualities, by which he achieved it. He has attained the Treasury Bench, and afterwards the headship of a Department, because he has known how to make himself disagreeable. He has made his way according to the law, which a modern writer conceives himself to have discovered, of progression by antagonism, or by a sort of moral attraction of repulsion. It is a question, however, whether Mr. Ayrton has not pushed these qualities a little beyond the limits at which they are serviceable to him. He has elected to survive in office the censure implied in the withdrawal of his Park Rules. Mr. Ayrton would have been missed from the Treasury Bench. He has acquired a certain reputation as an answerer of questions, as a sayer, in his way, of good

things, which induces members to grin with expectancy when he rises, and to chuckle before he has said two or three words. His office has given him two or three opportunities of being sarcastic at the expense of the English climate, and of making jocose allusions to the ladies—both unfailing subjects of merriment in the House of Commons. He has considerable skill in pinning a member down to an absurdity, or handing him over to a ridiculous alternative. Moreover, the anticipation that he will probably say something to give somebody pain adds materially to the zest with which his answers and explanations are looked for. As a private, or, as the phrase goes, an independent member, he was, perhaps, something of a busybody; but, as Mr. Mill observed of him, he "often said a useful word when there was no one else to say it." It must in fairness be added that the number of words of all sorts which he uttered was so much in excess of the contributions of

other members that a larger proportion of useful ones might fairly be demanded from him. On questions of form, on matters involving minute details of fact, or on points of interpretation, Mr. Ayrton was becoming an authority in the House of Commons when he took office. He has a shrewdness and subtlety half lawyer-like, half Oriental, and strengthened in both respects, perhaps, by his Bombay residence and experience. Mr. Ayrton has, very probably, a strong sense of public duty; but unfortunately his conception of public duty seems to be limited to duty to the public purse; and does not include courtesy, generosity, and the demeanour until recently natural to English statesmen, and traditional among them.

PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., CITY ROAD, LONDON.


00143030

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018